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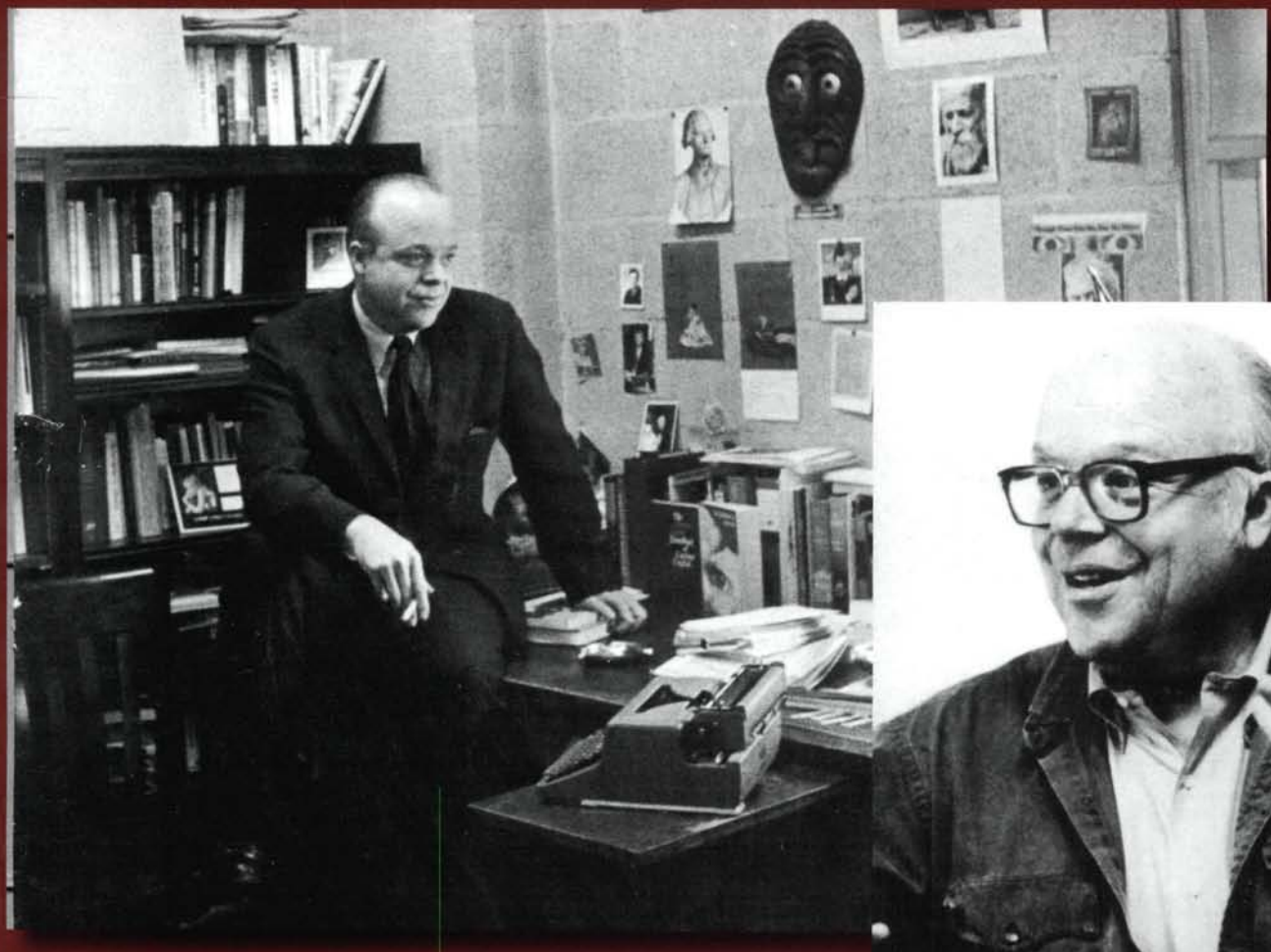

George Garrett, R.I.P.
by Fred Chappell

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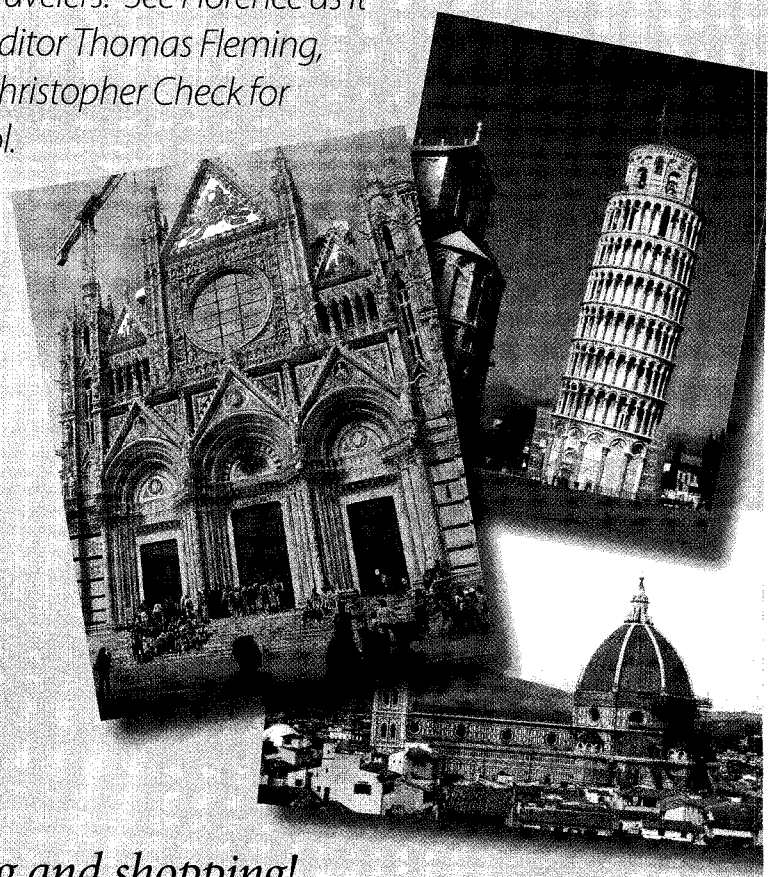

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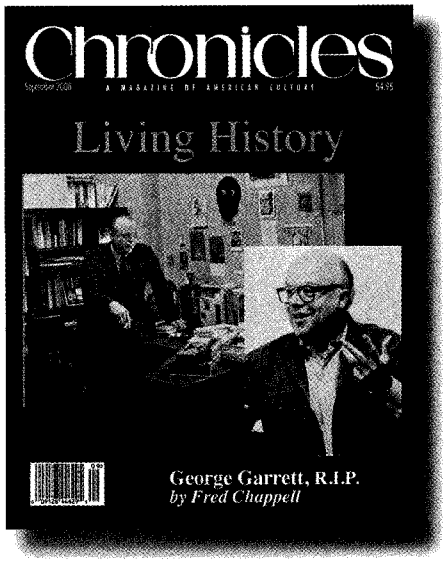

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Rumanian Distinctions

I wish to thank *Chronicles* for the insightful parts of Derek Turner's recent "Letter From Rumania" ("What Civilization Remains," *Correspondence*, June). Some portions are extremely lively and convey a vivid picture of his experiences there.

As an informed reader, however, I was struck by the one-sided view the article imparts in several ways to the common reader. To the uninformed reader, aside from Bucharest, it might seem as if the whole of Rumania were Transylvania—and as if the whole of Transylvania were just a bit Rumanian, perhaps not even Rumanian at all.

Focusing on Transylvania's minorities was not *per se* an unwelcome idea. Indeed, beginning with the 12th century, Transylvania's Saxon settlers contributed a lot to the urban civilization of that province conquered and occupied by Hungary shortly before. On the other hand, the native population, the underprivileged majority (Mr. Turner calls them "Vlachs") constituted for many centuries the province's pariah, most of the time deprived of all rights. The approach in which the focus is predominantly on the Saxon and Hungarian presence is bound to distort much of the historical realities of a province where the native Rumanian population has been for centuries an essential component of the land's history.

Moreover, calling them "Vlachs" (as the author does when writing about oil: a substance "later Vlachs would regard as much more valuable than cattle or even churches") is both unjust in terms of historical realities regarding values and infelicitous in terms of usage. The term *Vlach* is applied to Rumanians by foreigners, connotes disdain, and has been used pejoratively, most of the time in derogatory fashion. Leaving aside the obvious "*parti pris*," a better title of Mr. Turner's piece could have been "Letter From Transylvania" (and, perhaps, Bucharest).

—Dr. Andrei Brezianu
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Turner Replies:

Dr. Brezianu has highlighted the perils faced by outsiders seeking to comment on complex historical matters within the short compass of a magazine article. I was not aware that *Vlach* was a pejorative term and would not have used it had I known. However, in my defense, almost all the guidebooks and histories I relied on during my journey used the term freely (and not negatively).

I was fully aware that I was skimping somewhat on the Rumanian version of events, but I had little choice when there were only a few pages of *Chronicles* at my disposal. And histories, whether potted magazine versions or scholarly tomes, do tend to focus on the wealthiest, most influential, and best-known historical actors, in this case more often Saxons and Hungarians than ethnic Rumanians. Nonetheless, I'd hoped that I had paid tribute to ethnic Rumanians at least fleetingly, by referring to the vibrant and still partly extant folk culture they have created over centuries of hard work and exploitation, by being fair about Vlad Tepes, and by empathizing with their plight at the hands of Hungarians and then Ceausescu. To quote myself, "for [ethnic Rumanians] the long Hungarian suzerainty meant centuries of impoverishment, and social, linguistic, and religious marginalization, a debased state for a people tracing its descent from dogged Dacians and Roman soldiers."

My article certainly did not compass all the reality of modern Rumania, but what article could? Perhaps Dr. Brezianu might care to write an article of his own, to help give all of us a fuller picture of this fascinating and beautiful country.

E-mail your letter to the editor.
polemics@chroniclesmagazine.org

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by Leon Hadar

Surging Toward a Time Horizon

Having listened to recent statements made by President George W. Bush and his presumptive heir, John McCain, I am impressed that these two carriers of the neocon torch expect the opponents of their disastrous military misadventure in Mesopotamia, including presumptive Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, to crawl on all fours before the War Party's leaders, hail the power of their strategic foresight, and beg for their forgiveness. The *Surge*—S-U-R-G-E—in Iraq. Did we mention the Surge? Yes, Dick, Paul, Bill, and "Scooter," the success of the Surge just forces every one of us to reread all the back issues of *The Weekly Standard*, to watch reruns of FOX News programs, and to admit that, unlike us appeasers and defeatists, you guys were right from the beginning!

And by the way, thanks for not listening to Silly Us, and that again includes Obama. Can you imagine what would have happened if we hadn't ousted an Iraqi leader who had no ties to Al Qaeda or any responsibility for the September 11 attacks? Or the mess that we would have on our hands if we hadn't invaded a country that had no weapons of mass destruction and that didn't pose a direct threat to our national security? Or if President Bush had paid attention to the warnings: that perhaps America won't be able to impose democracy at the point of gun on a non-Western political culture; that we shouldn't open the Iraqi Pandora's box of warring ethnic, religious, and tribal groups and remove the most effective military counterbalance to the radical Shiites leaders in Tehran; and that the costs of military occupation of Mesopotamia would be very high in terms of lives and treasure and would harm our strategic position in the Middle East and elsewhere?

Never mind. That's just the sort of ancient history that members of the reality-based community are obsessed with. The Surge has proved that victory is just around the corner, it's the Turning Point we've been expecting, and it's a pity that those preoccupied with timetables or timelines for withdrawal just don't get it. Obama was "completely wrong" in opposing the Bush administration's Surge in January 2007, McCain argued recently. "The fact is, if we had done what Sen. Obama wanted to do, we would have lost," he stated during one of his town-hall meetings. "And we would have faced a wider war. And we would have had greater problems in Afghanistan and the entire region."

Is that so? Even after the Surge, America continues to face a "wider war" in the broader Middle East and is confronting "greater problems in Afghanistan and the entire region." One reason is that, with more U.S. troops deployed as part of the Surge in Iraq, an overstretched U.S. military hasn't been able to put more troops in Afghanistan, where we have yet to win the victory we had set out for ourselves: destroying the entire infrastructure and killing the leaders of Al Qaeda and their Taliban allies—all those who were actually responsible for the horrific events of September 11.

The Surge, which amounted to a decision to escalate the war in Iraq—just after the outcome of a congressional election had made it clear that American voters were opposed to that war—could only be considered a "success" if one starts to measure things based on extremely low expectations, in the same way that we would describe as "impressive" the 100-percent rise in GDP *per capita* in a poor sub-Saharan country from, say, one dollar to two, or the reduction in deaths from gang violence in one inner city from 500 to 250 in one month. Or imagine your kid returning from school with his report card. "Mom, Dad—I want to thank you for hiring David P—to tutor me this year. If you recall, last year I had ten F's and one D. This year I only have seven F's and four D's." Now that's some "progress"!

Yes, the level of violence has fallen from the worst months of the occupation but still remains as high as that of 2005. More Iraqi civilians were killed in the first four months of this year than in the same months in 2005. This kind of progress was achieved thanks to the increase in the number of U.S. forces and the *ad hoc* deals, including payments of thousands of U.S. dollars, with members of Sunni militias, a.k.a. terrorists, many of whom had murdered American soldiers and Shiite civilians in the past and have now turned against another terrorist group, Al Qaeda, in Iraq. Moreover, the decrease in violence is in part a reflection of the "success" of the process of ethnic cleansing, which has forced Sunnis out of Shiite neighborhoods and *vice versa*. There just aren't as many enemies around the block to behead this afternoon. At the same time, most of the more than five million Iraqis who have fled Iraq—a great number of them middle-class professionals and Christians—have no intention of returning home any time soon.

The Bush administration's boasting recalls a "report" that appeared in "America's Finest News Source" on June 23, 2004. Under the headline "Coalition: Vast Majority Of Iraqis Still Alive," *The Onion* "quoted" CPA administrator L. Paul Bremer publicly touting the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom:

> "As the Coalition's rule draws to a close, the numbers show that we have an awful lot to be proud of," Bremer said Tuesday. "As anyone who's taken a minute and actually looked at the figures can tell you, the vast majority of Iraqis are still alive—as many as 99 percent. While

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10,000 or so Iraqi civilians have been killed, pretty much everyone is not dead."

The Bush administration and its neoconservative cheerleaders raised the high standards with which we were expected to measure the success of the Iraq war (in addition to uncovering Saddam's ties to Osama and finding those WMDs): a democratic, politically stable, and economically prosperous Iraq, serving as a model for the entire Middle East and making peace with Israel, and not a politically unstable and economically poverty-stricken Iraq, in the midst of a low-level civil war, ruled by a coalition of Shiite and Kurdish militias, and an ally of Iran. And now the Bushies expect all of us to applaud the fact that Iraq may be less politically unstable than she was late last year?

The political bottom line is obvious to the majority of Americans who, according to opinion polls, think the Iraq war was a mistake and want the administration to draft a plan for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq. That explains why American voters haven't been so impressed by McCain's earlier support for the Surge or why they are not punishing Obama for expressing skepticism about the Surge's expected value. If anything, President Bush and his aides seem to be embracing elements of Obama's plan for Iraq, agreeing to set a general "time horizon" for the withdrawal of combat troops as part of a long-term security accord negotiated with Baghdad. This is the same President Bush who has long derided timetables for troop withdrawals as dangerous and has adamantly fought efforts by congressional Democrats and other "defeatists" to impose what he described as "artificial" timelines for withdrawal, which would supposedly play into the hands of the terrorists and deprive America of "victory" in Mesopotamia.

The reports about the Bush administration's embrace of a "time horizon" came out during the same week in which the White House announced its decision to have Undersecretary of State William Burns, the third-ranking person in the State Department, sit down in Geneva in the same room with Iranian nuclear envoy Saeed Jalili and high-ranking diplomats from five other countries to try to negotiate a deal to suspend Tehran's uranium-enrichment plan.

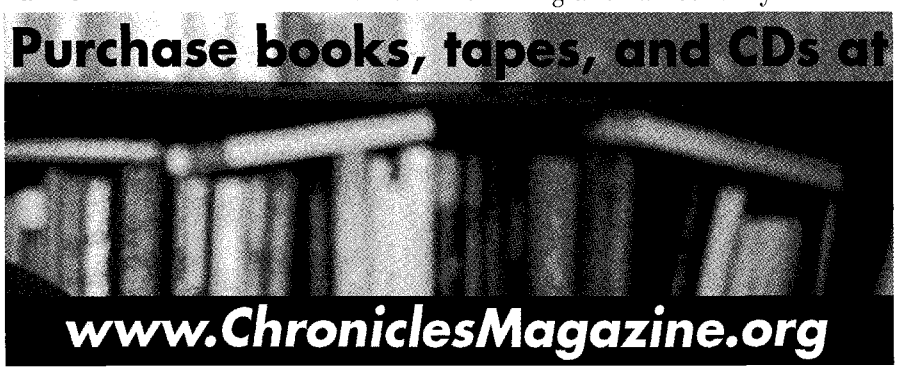
Yes, that's the same President Bush who, during a recent address to the Israeli Knesset, compared those who would talk with Iran to those who talked to Adolf Hitler in Munich, taunting them as followers of "the false comfort of appeasement, which has been repeatedly discredited by history." Indeed, both Bush and McCain have taken swipes at Obama for proposing direct negotiations—the kind that the Americans are conducting now in Munich (oops: Geneva) with that infamous member of the Axis of Evil.

Indeed, pundits in Washington were intrigued by the fact that the Bushies were taking the diplomatic course of talking to Iran and discussing dates for troop withdrawal from Iraq on the same week that Obama was visiting Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. That the Bush administration was embracing elements of the more realistic agenda already promoted by Obama helped place the Democratic presidential hopeful in the mainstream of foreign-policy thinking and ran contrary to the efforts by McCain and the Republicans to cast him as a left-wing peacenik with little experience or understanding of foreign policy. That the timetable proposed by Iraqi President Nouri al-Maliki looked more like the one proposed by Obama than by Bush only helped to highlight Obama's mastery of Middle Eastern diplomacy. Moreover, some pundits suggested that we were witnessing a "convergence" of the views of the two leading presidential candidates and their supporters over Iraq and Iran.

The next president will not take office for more than four months, so it might be too early for the realists in Washington to celebrate a victory for their approach to foreign policy. In fact, it's quite possible that President Bush and his aides have decided that they simply don't have enough political support to pursue either a grand diplomatic bargain with Tehran or a military confrontation with the Iranians. They may have concluded that a short-term deal with Iran is the most cost-effective way of managing the current crisis and that it is in their best interests to leave the issue to the next president.

Or perhaps the White House's symbolic concessions to the Iranians are nothing more than a diplomatic smoke screen that allows the Bush administration to argue, before it moves toward using military force against Iran, that it had gone out of its way to placate the Iranians and to give them a chance to reach a peaceful agreement—and that Tehran is therefore responsible for any resulting war in the Persian Gulf.

Similarly, the notion of a "time horizon" for a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq is very different from an actual, concrete timetable for the pullout of American forces. It is probably part of an effort to help Prime Minister Maliki burnish his nationalist credentials before the coming provincial elections in Iraq and to open a dialogue with Obama. Ironically, it is not unlikely that the one who will benefit the most from the Surge may be Obama, its earlier opponent, and not McCain, its most enthusiastic cheerleader. ©



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OLD DOMINION, R.I.P.

In the last 38 years, Virginia has evolved from being the "Mother of Presidents" to the "Mother of Foreigners." That is the upshot of the latest hodgepodge of data from the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center. Now, without reading the study, most anyone could probably conclude that the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., are home to the most foreigners. But few would suspect that Harrisonburg, Virginia, deep in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, is number two on the center's list.

How far the Old Dominion has come since 1970, when just one percent of the population was foreign born! Now, says Weldon Cooper's Qian Cai, a native of Nanchang, China, it's 10 percent—most of them Asian and Hispanic (40 and 36 percent). Foreign-born *noncitizens* are six percent of the population. Of Hispanic immigrants statewide, the population has more than tripled since 1990, from 152,000 to 460,000; nearly 90 percent landed here in the last 15 years, 44 percent in the last five. Twenty percent of Northern Virginia's residents were born abroad, many of them Hispanics, with Harrisonburg next at nine percent. Hispanics are now 13 percent of Harrisonburg's population.

Across the commonwealth, 43 percent of Hispanic immigrants over age 25 did not finish high school. More than 69 percent of recent Hispanic immigrants "do not speak English well or at all," and even after 21 years of residence, 28 percent fall into the same category, something the taxpayers of Harrisonburg know from experience. About 40 percent of Harrisonburg's schoolchildren are enrolled in English as a Second Language programs, the highest rate in the state, according to the city's *Daily News-Record*. Of those children, 70 percent are Hispanic, and 65 percent are citizens because they were born in the United States. Most of the children in this latter group, of course, are also Hispanic. In 2007, the paper reported, about 20 percent of those seeking welfare, also mostly Hispanic, did not speak English. So much for assimilation. The area's poultry and construction industries love low-wage Hispanic workers, and federal immigration cops man a permanent office and frequently put "detainers" on illegal-immigrant criminals. About the only good news lately is that the city's free medical clinic stopped taking illegal-immigrant patients. But the hospital has to.

Not that Hispanics are the only immigrants here. The city's liberal religious nuts are neck deep in refugee resettlement, importing Kurds, Iraqis, and Iranians, among others. This is done, naturally, without asking the citizens whose ancestors settled the Valley 200 years ago what they think about it. But we needn't go back that far to see how things have changed. As Qian Cai's report shows, 64 percent of Virginia's foreign-born in 1900 were Germans, Irish, or British. The rest were a smattering of Scots, Canadians, Italians, Russians, "other Europeans," and a Chinaman or two. Now, 76 percent of Virginia's foreign-born are from Asia or Latin America.

Fear not, however. As the neocons keep telling us, America is merely a proposition to which anyone can assent, regardless of religion or creed, meaning that anyone who gargles the Enlightenment table talk in the Declaration of Independence and regurgitates some second-grade history can be an American. So you needn't worry about the African with three wives living next door, who may have been pot-roasting his neighbor's liver back in the old country just six months ago. Or the Asian cat who still thinks dog is a delicacy. We are, after all, "a nation of immigrants."

This is the moonshine that schoolchildren hereabouts are forced to imbibe. The sad thing is that, if any region is a repository of the Old Republic's history, it is the Shenandoah Valley. Led by Royal Governor Alexander Spotswood, the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe crossed the Blue Ridge in 1716 to claim the Valley for King George I. Gen. Stonewall Jackson made his name during the 1862 Valley Campaign. Kernstown. Port Republic. Cross Keys. Confederate cavalry Gen. Turner Ashby fell in battle on land now owned by James Madison University. Two years later, Gen. Philip Sheridan, aided by a yellow-haired fellow named Custer, put the torch to home, barn, and livestock to destroy the breadbasket of the Confederacy. It is remembered as "The Burning." And on and on.

From Marse Robert's Arlington to Stonewall's Valley, foreigners are slicing through Virginia like a scythe wielded by rootless liberal elites who love neither home nor hearth. The Old Dominion is vanishing, tone and tint. Observing from Jefferson's university, Qian Cai of China composes the dirge.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

BRITAIN'S FIERY FURNACE

Last month, two brave British schoolboys were given detention because they refused to kneel down and pray to Allah during a religious-education lesson. The boys attend classes at Alsager High School near Stoke-on-Trent, situated approximately midway between Manchester and Birmingham. The local county council has a diversity curriculum that requires children be educated in the beliefs of different faiths. According to the council, this diversity education "is essential to understanding."

As part of "understanding" Islam, the boys' religion education class was forced to don Muslim headgear and watch a film about Muslim worship. After the film ended, the teacher produced prayer mats from her closet and said, "We are now going out to pray to Allah." Children were then told to kneel on Muslim prayer mats and to

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recite a Muslim prayer.

When the two boys (11 and 12) refused to worship Allah, their teacher accused them of being disrespectful and ordered them to detention. Not satisfied that her authority over the children's education and spiritual life was reestablished, the teacher punished the remainder of the class by depriving them of the afternoon snack.

Parents were rightly outraged. The grandfather of one child in the class described the forced worship as "absolutely disgusting, there's no other way of putting it." Karen Williams, whose child was also in the class, said, "I am absolutely furious my daughter was made to take part in it and I don't find it acceptable."

The boys' refusal to violate the First Commandment and the parents' anger at the school are good signs. The children and their parents demonstrate that there are still a few Britons left who will resist the onslaught of multiculturalism.

What is worrisome, however, is the vocabulary many parents are using to describe the teacher's actions. Rather than invoking their ancient rights as British subjects, the parents complain that the school violated the boys' "human rights." Nary a word was said about the historic rights that made England, and later, Great Britain, the envy of oppressed peoples of the globe.

Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, and centuries of customary law defined and secured British liberty. The fundamental rights of Englishmen, in the words of William Henry Drayton, are "rights which no time, no contract, no climate can diminish." This great inheritance should be a source of British identity and the fortress from which Britons fight the Islamization of their country.

Today, Britons look to the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into the British law. The act makes it unlawful for any public body to behave in a way that is incompatible with the Convention. Case law from Strasbourg and the European Court of Human Rights is binding on British judges. "Human rights" rather than the "rights of Englishmen" has become the law that modern Britons invoke when government officials overstep their authority.

The episode with the schoolboys shows that even in 2008 multiculturalists can push for a bridge too far. In Stoke-on-Trent, this bridge was mandatory worship of a false god. Fortunately, two plucky lads refused to violate the First Commandment. Unfortunately, their parents are not using the incident to teach them about the rights of Englishmen. The parents' pathetic appeal to "human rights" as defined by judges in Strasbourg teaches British children nothing about their inheritance, nor does it equip them to resist other forms of multiculturalist tyranny.

—William J. Watkins

THE BISHOPS' HOT TUB

The American Catholic Church has leaned left for so long that it's hardly news any more. This began way back when Cardinal Gibbon overruled Pope Benedict XV's plea for peace during the Great War and pledged to President Wilson the undying fighting loyalty of millions of American Catholic boys (including my father, to whom Gibbon gave a personal pro-war pep talk at Catholic University in the winter of 1916-17). Most Catholic bishops today grew up Democrats, so it has been easy for them to buy into the agenda of the Democratic Party, blissfully unaware of any contradiction between the party's social agenda and the Catholic Church's commitment to the defense of human life. What Pope John Paul II called the "Culture of Death" is, in America, championed primarily by the Democratic Party—although the GOP is catching up fast—and the bishops are joined to it at the hip.

From time to time, however, reality intrudes, as it did, big-time, this past January, when Catholic Charities of Richmond, Virginia, actually arranged an abortion for a minor child that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) had placed with them for safekeeping. The responsible bishops managed to keep the tragedy secret for several months, but *The Wanderer*, a small Catholic weekly, broke the story in June, and all hell broke loose.

The bishops' Washington headquarters is known as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It had been angling for months to secure federal grants, amounting to several million dollars, to provide foster care for minor children. (The Richmond case involved an illegal alien whose parents could not be located.) This was nothing new. The left in Congress is munificent in its largesse where the Church is concerned: Catholic Charities, USA, alone receives over two billion dollars in government funding per year. Perhaps the bishops hadn't noticed, but their USCCB bureaucracy has grown over the years to gargantuan proportions that mirror the left-wing federal and congressional bureaucracies with which it constantly works and which distribute its funding.

Naturally, when Richmond Bishop Francis DiLorenzo and his colleagues at the USCCB found out about the incident, they were shocked—shocked!—that their fine Catholic employees would allow such a travesty. It was even worse when they discovered that, while the abortion's facilitators apparently discussed the abortion at length with their bureaucratic colleagues in Washington before the fact, they never called a priest, much less the bishop, to ask what to do. Poor Bishop DiLorenzo had to inform his brother bishops that "some members of . . . staff were not sufficiently aware of Church teaching." One exasperated Catholic official at HHS told me bluntly: "It's come to this. The U.S. government can't trust the Catholic Church to take care of children."

Here's the nub of the problem: The Church bureaucracy has become virtually indistinguishable from its government counterparts. Many Church bureaucrats aren't even Catholic, but they are "experts" in social work and other fields typically funded by the

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government. No wonder they are clueless when it comes to Catholic teaching: All Church employees have to take "abuse prevention" courses, but, ironically, the bishops refuse to include abortion in their definition of child abuse. Now they are "shocked" by what happened in Richmond.

Theodore Cardinal McCarrick let the cat out of the bag just before his retirement in 2006. When asked why the Church didn't take more aggressive action regarding the "Catholic" politicians who vote for abortion but continue to receive the Eucharist, the cardinal daintily referred to "the need to work with politicians and other public officials rather than alienate them. For example, money is needed for Catholic hospitals, charities, and education." In translation, eliminating the deliberately ambiguous passive voice, he said, "We've been bought."

The Church has been in the hot tub long enough. It's time to shut the water off. Only when they throw those golden handcuffs into the Potomac will our bishops be able truly to be bishops again. Yes, it will require a renewal of sacrificial giving from the laity, but, if the bishops promise in return to do their jobs, spurning politics and embracing the Cross, it will be worth it. We should pray that the tragedy in Richmond will bear some good fruit, after all the evil that it has exposed.

—Christopher Manion

OBITER DICTA

Thanks to the diligent efforts of our poetry editor, **Catharine Savage Brosman**, *Chronicles* has poetry scheduled to run in each issue, extending well into 2009. This means that she will not consider new poetry for publication until April 1, 2009. Before that date, any poetry mailed to *Chronicles* will be returned unopened, and e-mailed poetry will be deleted. Thank you for your patience and consideration.

We are pleased to announce the addition of longtime contributor **Tom Piatak** to our masthead as a contributing editor. Mr. Piatak, an attorney, lives with his wife, Val, in Cleveland, Ohio.

Our poet is **William Baer**, the founding editor of *The Formalist*, a journal of metrical poetry, and a professor of English at the University of Evansville. Dr. Baer is the author of several books, including *Writing Metrical Poetry: Contemporary Lessons for Mastering Traditional Forms*, *Sonnets: 150 Contemporary Sonnets*, *"Borges" and Other Sonnets*, and *The Unfortunates*, which received the T.S. Eliot Prize in 1997. His work has appeared in *The Hudson Review*, *The New Criterion*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Antioch Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, and elsewhere.

Our cover features two photographs of our late contributing editor **George Garrett**. They are used with the permission of the University of Virginia's media-relations department.

Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

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by Thomas Fleming

Chinese Monkeys on Our Backs

An eminent British statesman once confessed to Horace Walpole that he had learned all he knew of the Wars of the Roses from reading Shakespeare's histories. I do not recall who the statesman was, and I am only guessing that Walpole is the source of the anecdote. As is the case of most of what I think I know of history, I am a bit shaky on the details. I am scarcely alone in having an uncertain grasp of historical facts. Most of us pick up our historical erudition from dodgy sources: secondhand anecdotes from friends, scraps of potted history from textbooks and "this day in history" features, and History Channel programs on the secrets of Nostradamus or the mysteries handed down from the Knights Templar to the funny guys in fezzes who raise money for burn units.

Of what possible use is the past to Americans who believe (with Marx) that we make our own history? "History," in our fine barbaric yawp, is at its worst an obstacle to man's limitless progress toward the godhead and at best a useless relic of the contemptible past. "He's history," we say of a celebrity down on his luck or an Illinois governor trudging the well-worn path to the federal hoosegow.

Those who care enough about history to make a modest income by spending ten to twenty hours a week, eight months a year, in the academic asylums known as universities express their contempt for the past by learning as little as they can and by forcing that little into the latest fashions in "scholarship"—Marxism, "gender studies," and French literary theories that deny the meaning of meaning. If they are intelligent enough to know the difference between a truth and a lie, they choose to lie, or better still plagiarize one another's lies.

As Clyde Wilson explained to me years ago, most historians today are not even capable of the honest form of plagiarism that requires them to footnote the opinions they have appropriated. Think of historians as news anchors or columnists reporting on the past. Like Katie Couric or George Will, they rely on teams of assistants to pre-digest books and articles for them, and like poor dear Katie, they are too ill educated—no matter how much they might bone up on a particular specialty or event—to have even the most general understanding of periods more remote than the 1970's.

There are, to be sure, numerous honorable exceptions: useful pedants whose careful researches could provide the foundations for some future Hume or Gibbon. I would happily double their salaries and release them from the unpleasant duty of trying to teach America's youth who, to avoid the wormwood of learning and the gall of thinking, would prefer to have their teeth "extracted by terrified amateurs."

Most serious students I have known hated history classes with good reason. Given the choice between theoreticians of one school or another or comedy-club entertainers, a sane young man or woman would always choose Cedric the Entertainer over apologists for crime—Carl Sandburg and Victor Davis Hanson come to mind, or boosters such as Moses Hadas and the Durants, or the terrible simplifiers who control the textbook industry. Better *Gone With the Wind* than *A Silence at Appomattox*.

As a graduate student, I shared the contempt for all things Roman so common among half-trained Hellenists. I used to boast that all I knew of the empire was a Frank Slaughter novel about Constantine. This was not strictly true, since I had studied Tacitus with T.R.S. Broughton and read haphazardly among the Roman historians, but my jest came close enough to the truth. A few years later, I might have said that everything I knew of Roman and Byzantine history came from Gibbon, and the truth of that statement can be measured by the years I have spent unlearning Gibbon's mistakes and prejudices.

Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* remains one of my favorite books. Half-sick with the flu or lazing about at the beach, I reach for Gibbon with the same anticipation of unfailing satisfaction with which I reach for Raymond Chandler or P.G. Wodehouse or a glass of George Dickel. With what pleasure do I read, as the cadences of the opening sentences wash over a mind fatigued by the unending gossip of daily news:

> In the second century of the Christian Æra, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valor. The gentle but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence: the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government.

In these three balanced and supple sentences, Gibbon

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conveys both his respect for the empire and his ironic detachment from what he regarded as its self-imposed hypocrisies. It is easy, these days, to miss the significance of Gibbon's accomplishment. Yes, it is true, he depended heavily on predecessors like Tillemont, who had covered the first six centuries of the Christian empire with a meticulous pedantry to which Gibbon did not aspire, but for the most part he read the original sources—historical, literary, theological—and, while greatly indebted to an earlier generation of scholars, he was generally wrestling with the original sources from his own point of view. The best way to begin to know something of late ancient and Byzantine history is to read Gibbon in the edition annotated by J.B. Bury, who corrects many of his errors and argues against some (though hardly all) of his prejudices: Bury, like his master, was a rationalist.

Gibbon is among the greatest masters of English prose, but he is also a storyteller of genius. Confronted with dubious and conflicting sources for the sale of the empire after the murder of Pertinax, Gibbon constructs a compelling tale. When news of the Praetorian Guard's auction spreads through the city,

> It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, who, regardless of the public calamities, was indulging himself in the luxury of the table. His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parasites, easily convinced him that he deserved the throne, and earnestly conjured him to embrace so fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man hastened to the Praetorian camp, where Sulpicianus was still in treaty with the guards, and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above one hundred and sixty pounds) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the soldiers . . .
>
> It was now incumbent on the Praetorians to fulfil the conditions of the sale. They placed their new sovereign, whom they served and despised, in the centre of their ranks, surrounded him on every side with their shields, and conducted him in close order of battle through the deserted streets of the city. . . . After Julian had filled the senate house with armed soldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affections of the senate. . . . From the senate Julian was conducted, by the same military procession, to take possession of the palace. The first objects that struck his eyes, were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his supper. The one he viewed with indifference, the other with contempt. A magnificent feast was prepared by his order, and he amused himself, till a very late hour, with dice, and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was observed, that after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night; revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money.

Much like the Emperor Tiberius, Gibbon had contempt for the obsequious senators of the empire, and, after Constantine, his contempt turns to disgust with a civilization that has betrayed (in his view) its foundations by accepting an alien and unmanly religion. As the barbarians came pouring into the provinces, Gibbon almost seems to side with the sturdy Germans against the degenerate representatives of Romanitas. Many Christians (Catholics in particular) are disturbed by Gibbon's incessant sneering at the Church, but I have never heard of a sound Christian whose faith was unsettled by Gibbon. A father or teacher, in giving Gibbon to young people, will quite properly point out his prejudices.

The same caution should be given to young readers of an equally magisterial, if less well-known, work of ancient history, George Grote's *A History of Greece*. If Gibbon was a kind of skeptical conservative, Grote was an enthusiastic Whig liberal, a disciple of David Ricardo and the Mills. As the son of a wealthy banker, young George was sent not to university but to the bank. Thus, after he left Charterhouse school at the age of 16, Grote was an autodidact, though it must be said that a Charterhouse boy in those days knew more Greek and Latin than whole departments of classics in major American universities today. (Other distinguished Carthusian classicists include Lewis Crusius, Henry Nettleship, Sir Richard Jebb, and Henry Liddell.)

Grote was not a placeholding heir at the bank, any more than he was an amateur scholar. In a great age of economic theory, he distinguished himself by his understanding of how markets work, and in politics he was a leading advocate of parliamentary reform. He served in three parliaments. In other words, he is probably the only ancient historian in our language who possessed a practical understanding of business and government. (Arnold Toynbee, who compiled economic statistics, is a partial exception, but he was a Byzantine specialist.)

The negative way of looking at Grote is to say that he imposed the Whig theory of history on ancient Greece, and if you were taught about the Golden Age of Pericles, the glo-

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ries of the Athenian democracy that liberated itself from the shackles of tradition, religion, and kinship, you have George Grote to thank. On the other hand, until the Afrocentrists, Marxists, and feminists came along with their lies, the Whigs' great lie was probably the only way in which the modern world could grapple with the Greeks.

I think I have done my duty in recommending two great works of history that anyone who wishes to fancy himself an educated man would wish to read. I deliberately picked two historians with whose strongly expressed points of view I strenuously disagree. I am, if anything, more offended by Grote's liberal faith in progress than by Gibbon's childish contempt for the Faith. (Gibbon—the quondam convert—was more than half in love with the Church he professed to hate.) The study of history should do more than confirm our prejudices or comfort our ignorance. If we once understand that this side of the moon there is no such thing as objectivity, we can begin to understand what history is good for. Absolute historical truth, even about very recent times, is an impossibility. That much should be clear to anyone who has watched Akira Kurosawa's *Rashômon* or John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*.

There is, I believe, no more terrible lie than the liberal historian's pretension to impartiality and no mask more unlike its wearer than the mask of objectivity. How can any normal human being judge his mother as if she were the mother of a neighbor, an alien, or an enemy? How can we pretend to put our church or country on the same plane as any other church or country? The idea is not simply ridiculous: It is disgusting. The man who says he can be "objective" about his family and nation is really saying that he despises his family and nation in the sense that he is looking down on them from above.

The pretense to objectivity is one of the great Enlightenment fallacies that reaches the pinnacle of absurdity in the writings of Adam Smith and William Godwin. Smith perversely claimed that since to love our fellow man is the greatest commandment (conveniently overlooking the first and greatest commandment to love God) we should love ourselves no more than our neighbor, while Godwin urged us, in making moral decisions, to assume the position of an angel looking down on the earth. But even angels cannot be entirely objective, as the story of Satan and his rebellion shows. Objectivity, if it means anything, is an attribute belonging only to divinity. To attempt it is to play at being a little god, who has to lower the rest of humanity in order to elevate himself. Objectivity is not merely a lie; it is among the greatest and most obscene lies.

To chase down historical truth, while not impossible, is a task requiring more courage and skill than hunting lions with a spear and a finer-tuned intelligence than is possessed by the greatest of physicists. If particles are not entirely predictable, how infinitely less predictable are men and their motives? Historical truth is a worthy pursuit for a few historians; the rest of us have to content ourselves with studying not history but the historians themselves. That is only one of many reasons why it is more important for historians to be storytellers than to be well-trained specialists who cannot see the forest or even the trees for all the lichens and termites they put under the microscope.

All writers and readers who aspire to truth should remind themselves that it is impossible to attain to historical reality, or rather that the pursuit of truth is asymptotic: The closer we get to reality, the more it eludes us. The best to which we can aspire is to scratch up some sense of what the various players might have thought they were doing. In taking, alternately, the point of view of Godfrey of Bouillon and Alexios Komnenos in the First Crusade, we begin to appreciate how they viewed themselves and each other.

The sort of multivoiced history I am recommending has rarely been undertaken, though Herodotus and Shelby Foote have both made a good stab at it. No Whig or American liberal historian, however, has ever thought of picking up the knife. Most of us do not even have the time to read the opposing sides—Niketas Choniates and Geoffrey of Villehardouin, for example, on the Fourth Crusade. It is not impossible, however, to read opposing points of view with sympathy. Someone who has read Edward Gibbon, Sir Steven Runciman, and Jonathan Riley-Smith on the Crusades will not slip so easily into the usual clichés and anticlichés. It is better not to pretend to study history, when the most we are capable of is to study historians.

One of the best examples of this sort of historical writing is George Garrett's meticulously researched novels on the Elizabethan era. We hear the voices of the players, each speaking in his own right, and where judgment must be passed, it is the reader who must pass it.

If, as Frost observed, a liberal is someone who would not take his own side in an argument, we can conclude that illiberals—which is to say, real human beings—are those who know that they have to take their side in every historical argument. This should not be interpreted as an invitation to lie. In fact, the more honest we are with ourselves about our wholesome prejudices the more we can be on guard against the lies those prejudices give rise to. There is a Muslim perspective, too, on the Crusades, and an honest man would do well to study it with an open mind, though an old boss of mine once forbade me to review a collection of Islamic historians on the grounds that the book was published by the PLO. Ignorance, I mean to say, is bliss.

That is where the cult of objectivity leads in the end, to the adoration of the three Chinese monkeys, who would see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil. As everyone should know by now, evil—both for historians and for journalists—is any inconvenient truth that cannot be fit under the copybook headings drawn up by the revolutionaries who hate the truth almost as much as they hate God. ◁

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by Joseph Sobran

Words and Power

Most American presidents, unless they leave office in disgrace, are honored by having airports, schools, libraries, streets, and even whole cities named after them. The city of San Francisco has saluted President George W. Bush in a singular way—by naming a sewage-treatment plant after him.

Of course, this reminds us that the city on the Bay has long since made itself a synonym for disgusting vice. It can hardly insult Bush as much as it has already insulted the great saint for whom it is named. Few of us pause to reflect on that, and on why it was first called as it still is.

The same might be said of many other American cities that in more pious times were given names of religious significance: Providence, Corpus Christi, San Diego, St. Paul, St. Louis, San Jose (and St. Joseph), Santa Monica, Salem, San Antonio, Santa Fe, St. Augustine, San Pablo, St. Petersburg, San Clemente, San Gabriel, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Sacramento, and many others, right down to Hell (Michigan).

Catholics used to name their children after saints; Protestants, after such Old Testament figures as Aaron and Abraham. It was also common to name a child in honor of parents, ancestors, relatives, and patriotic heroes. Today Americans attach little meaning to words and names; hence the amazing profusion of girls named Kimberly, Britney, and Chelsea. (I don't know of a St. Kimberly, or of an Old Testament matriarch called Britney. On the other hand, the ancient names David, Ruth, Saul, Naomi, Judith, and Solomon are still common among Jews.)

Among the little mysteries of our time is the phrase we now find on so many questionnaires: "religious preference." Preference? Well, I'm a Catholic, but sometimes, in certain moods, I might prefer to be something else—a Unitarian or a Muslim, perhaps. I like Mormons, but I've never been in the mood to be one, even briefly. In Saudi Arabia, I understand, you are seldom asked which religion you "prefer"—the options are severely limited, and you'd better prefer Islam, if you know what's good for you. Religion is seen in those parts not as a matter of taste, but of truth.

One of the curious results of Bush's presidency is that a few months from now the United States may have, for the first time, a president with a Muslim name, something few of us would have predicted right after September 11, 2001. For all the wild fervor he has inspired, Obama is a routine liberal whose credo may be summed up in the view that genocide is "right-wing," whereas unlimited feticide is "enlightened." The notion that he represents a substantial departure from traditional politics is grimly risible. He enjoys the highest ratings from liberal and pro-abortion groups, differing from others of his sorry breed only in camouflage; insofar as it is up to him, the decimation of the American population, especially the black population, will continue undeflected by this putatively "black" president.

Needless to say, nothing I say against Obama should be construed as implying a preference for John McCain. As the old maxim has it, if God had intended us to vote, he would have given us candidates. As Scott McConnell has noted, "Virtually the entire bipartisan Washington establishment [including both Obama and McCain] now considers it normal that the United States spends as much militarily as the rest of the world combined." Yes, roughly half a trillion dollars per year—on "defense," which now means preparations for mass murder. The state's lexicon is full of words that serve to justify its power: *defense, security, safety, protection, health, service.* —Has your internal revenue servant come to your door lately?

The American Conservative recently published a thoughtful symposium on World War II, which all its contributors agreed was a needless and disastrous conflict—anything but the "good war" of our official propaganda. Yet none of them raised what I thought was the most obvious objection of all: that it brought us into the age of nuclear weapons.

What does it say about us that we have got used to so dreadful a fact? I am merely asking, not accusing or beating my own breast. What has modern man become? The question invites meditation. Why don't these apocalyptic weapons give us nightmares?

A really radical politician could outrage left and right by saying what Jesus Himself might say: that abortion and nuclear arms represent the two poles of what Pope John Paul II termed the modern world's "culture of death." Political parties are now defined by which categories of human life they regard as expendable. Killing may not exactly be the purpose of politics, but it seems to be the most natural result.

I am always amazed at how many people never stop to ponder the simple truth that government by the state must mean coercion. As Lenin said, the big question is *who is going to do what to whom.* Just as the art of a stage magician is to make you watch one hand while the other does the sleight, so a skilled politician makes you forget that any promises he makes will have to be kept by force; that is, making A do something for B that he does not willingly choose to do. Obama is the latest master of this dismal game. May he be honored by a hundred sewage-treatment plants. ◁

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Beginning With History

Revisions and Deviations

by Clyde Wilson

Any fool can write history, and many do. Please do not assume that I mean by this statement to vaunt the "expert" and slight the amateur. In writing history the amateur is sometimes gifted, and there is no more pestiferous fool than the smug, pretentious "expert" who thinks of his own mind as the repository of ultimate truth. What a good historian most needs is not "expertise" but the qualities we look for in a juror: intelligence and an inclination to avoid snap judgments and get to the bottom of things, to weigh evidence honestly, and to imagine times and places that are no longer recoverable in the flesh. No juror can entirely escape his own bias, but some are a lot more honest and fair than others.

Anybody who has been following the pronouncements that have been issuing from the mouths and word processors of professors of history (and official government historians) in recent years ought to be disabused of trust in the competence and good faith of "experts"—even if he has not seen firsthand the gutting of graduate education that has been taking place. There was a time when professors of history, whatever their viewpoints and degrees of talent, had to have proved themselves by the rigors of primary research and literate, balanced exposition. Increasingly they are just people who stayed in school a long time and learned the fashionable attitudes that entitle them to become spokespersons for the ruling party. The juror has been replaced by the commissar.

Young people should not study history for final answers but to expand consciousness. History is (properly) about human life—about the conflict of human perspectives, experiences, and values. On all human experience there is always the possibility of a differing perspective. Even the "facts" are often not as solid as they seem, having been selected out of a host of possibilities. Human life (and therefore history) is not a logical proposition, nor a source (chiefly) of entertainment, nor a mine of ideological precepts and pseudomoral judgments, nor a repository of accepted conclusions. It is a drama taking place in the mind of God, and only He knows the end. In a drama we look for a deeper meaning than "the facts." We look for understanding of the mystery of our existence. Since we are human, all that is human should interest us.

To guide the study of history for young people is a challenge, and nowhere more so than in regard to the war of 1861–65 and its causes and results, the Gordian knot of American history. Fortunately, we have, for a start, Shelby Foote's *The Civil War: A Narrative*, a magnificent and readable masterpiece of world literature which tells the most important part of the story—the experience—with fairness, depth, and insight. Note that Foote was not an academic "expert" but a novelist. He understood that the method of history must differ from the method of fiction but that both were seeking the same truth of human experience. There is more truth about the Civil War/Reconstruction in the 300 pages of Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* than in a million words by "expert" historians. The same goes for George Garrett's Elizabethan novels.

Generally speaking, in American history, what was written in the first half of the 20th century is more reliable than what came before or after. Much of the mainstream history produced in the 19th century reflected the viewpoint of people who took for granted that they were at the center of the universe—Boston. Since the mid-20th century, academic history has become more and more a party line, and popular history has deteriorated greatly under the same influences. The 21st century bodes fair to replace history as an intellectual enterprise with subsidized multicultural groupthink. The first half of the 20th century, though far from utopian, was the soundest era of American historiography.

There is much that is good, though little that is great, written about the War Between the States. The subject deserves a book-length annotated bibliography. However, to start: Foote for the story; Ludwell H. Johnson's *North Against South* for the facts, figures, and issues of 1848-1877; Avery O. Craven's *The Coming of the Civil War* for the causes; and Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of Reconstruction*, for the consequences. "Experts" will tell you with Pavlovian predictability that such works have been discredited by "new scholarship." This is a conventional lie. Many works that are now out of fashion have never been refuted and indeed were written by people vastly more learned and honest than their critics, who usually have not even read them, much less studied their sources. They have simply been declared multiculturally unacceptable.

For homeschoolers, let me suggest two "series" that will

Clyde Wilson contributed "American Historians and Their History: Scratching the Fleas" (Views) to the September 2005 issue of Chronicles.

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provide a rich source of reading. They are out of print but readily accessible. For primary students: the Landmark Books, published by Random House, in the 1950's and 60's, with individual titles covering many of the important events of U.S. history in interesting fashion. For secondary students, I recommend the 50-volume Yale Chronicles of America series published in the 1920's. The quality, of course, is uneven, but a large number of subjects are covered, many of them having dropped out of present-day consciousness. Homeschoolers ought also to have handy books that many have already discovered: Thomas DiLorenzo's *The Real Lincoln*, Thomas Woods' *Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*, and Kevin Gutzman's *Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution*. These works expose the host of lies, old and new, that circulate for truth in American discourse. (I thought I was the ideal person to write the *Politically Incorrect Guide to the War Between the States*, but the publisher wanted a writer who was younger and better-looking.)

All that being said, young people should be led away from the all-too-common American tendency to place the United States at the top and center of world history. America is far too young and unchastened a human experience to deserve or receive the attention of a great historian (although John Lukacs's *Outgrowing Democracy* makes a start). Aside from the European-educated Lukacs, there are perhaps only two American historians that can be considered world-class: the brilliant but warped Henry Adams, and the valiant anti-imperialist Charles A. Beard. "Conservative" historians (*i.e.*, Republican Big Business flacks) have sought to discredit Beard, but his works (such as *The Rise of American Civilization* and Pearl Harbor studies) remain highly relevant and readable).

I would not encourage much advanced reading in American history until after exposure to the great ancient historians and to the sophistication of the best European writing. (One might start here with Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* or Johannes Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages*.) And for understanding what history is and does, read John Lukacs's *Historical Consciousness* (preferably the first edition).

A particularly nasty and dishonest left-wing group, which has appointed itself watchdog of other people's opinions without any intellectual or moral qualification for the role, has damned me as a "revisionist" in regard to the era encompassing the War Between the States. They mean to make folks recoil from me in horror as kin to those notorious "revisionists" who deny Nazi atrocities. I am not a revisionist, but note that their assumption is that there is only one valid opinion, deviation from which is a crime. This bit of agitprop is pure Soviet tactics. It used to be that revisionism was thought of as the occasional change of historical perspective, an inevitable and benign thing that indicated a healthy intellectual life. When our present Culture Masters condemn disapproved historical viewpoints, they do not mean "revisionism" but the offense that the commies call "deviationist." ◁©▷

Post Card

by William Baer

"Hello!" This one's from Montego Bay:
"Glad you're not here." She never signs her name
but sends a different card each Valentine's Day,
for fifteen years. The message is always the same,
and all the cards are beautiful: Marseille;
Nazaré; Hilton Head, Carolina;
Maui; Acapulco; St-Tropez;
Casçais; and even the wall of China.
But what did he do? She'd left him without a word,
then, every summer, mails her forget-me-not,
and though he knows it's stupid, even absurd,
he craves forgiveness for he knows-not-what,
and wishes her nothing but love, which was, he knew,
exactly what she wanted him to do.

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David Hume: Historian

The Core of the Bookshelf

by Donald W. Livingston

Intellectual historians commonly group Voltaire, Edward Gibbon, William Robertson, and David Hume as the four greatest 18th-century historians. If limited to only one of these authors, we would do well to begin with Hume. For one thing, Hume is the only thinker in history who has achieved world-class status as a philosopher and as an historian. We are inclined to think of him today as a philosopher, but in his own time he was famous as an historian. He is still listed in the British Museum as "David Hume, Historian." Hume's *History of England* became a classic in his lifetime; it went through over 160 posthumous editions—some in printings of 100,000 copies.

The History of England is a six-volume work that begins with Roman Britain and ends with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. But Hume wrote it backward, beginning with the period that most interested him, that of the Stuart kings: James I, Charles I, Charles II, and James II. The Stuarts were a Scottish family, and Hume was a Scotsman. Like the rest of his countrymen, he had to come to terms with how the Scottish kings had been received in England. Mary Stuart was executed by Queen Elizabeth; a rebellion occurred against Charles I, who was executed for treason; and another revolution occurred in 1688 in which James II was driven from the throne and Catholics were forever forbidden to hold the crown. Even in Hume's day the legitimacy of the Protestant regime was still a question for many. Hume's main purpose in writing about this period was to provide a more comprehensive account—one that would do justice to both sides, explain the constitutional crisis that had run for some 40 years, and reconcile his countrymen to the constitution of liberty that had emerged from the conflict.

As he continued the history back to Roman Britain his focus expanded, revealing two larger stories: the rise of constitutional liberty in Britain and the gradual rise of civilization in Britain after the collapse of Rome. Both stories contain critiques of Whig self-conceptions dominant in the England of Hume's time. English Whigs viewed themselves as unique in having a constitution of liberty, and much of the world agreed. Voltaire and other French intellectuals greatly admired the British constitution. Whigs offered two reasons for this achievement. The first was the theory of the ancient constitution, in which liberty is a feature of the English national character going back to the Saxon forests. The history of England has been the story of how unpatriotic factions—the Normans, the Tudors, and lately the Stuart monarchs—have tried to subvert it. Every conspiracy, however, was blocked by patriotic heroes who have preserved the ancient constitution down to the present, where new factions now threaten it.

Hume sought to go beyond this destructive historiography of conspiracy by calling attention to what Hayek would later call the principle of "spontaneous order": the idea that social and political orders emerge as the result of individual human actions but are not intended by anyone or by any faction. This principle had been sketched out earlier by Spinoza and Mandeville, but it was refined and given wider application by Hume and Adam Smith. The market price of apples is an objective fact, but it was not intended by anyone or by any faction. Although Hume applied the principle of spontaneous order to the whole of human life, including morals, aesthetics, language, constitutional law, and civilization, he was not dogmatic about it. He never denied the reality of heroic individuals to effect dramatic changes within the traditions they had inherited. He presents Alfred the Great as an instance of just such a hero: "[F]ortune alone threw him into that barbarous age."

Applying the idea of spontaneous order to constitutional history, Hume tried to show that the historiography of the "ancient constitution" is false. Four distinct constitutions are discernible in English history, and the connection between them is not descent from an original, but a complex story of gradual change, violence, circumstances, and the unintended results of human action. Order emerges, but it is not the result of defeating a conspiracy to usurp an ancient constitution. So Hume's story of the English constitution is one of discontinuity, not continuity. This meant that the Stuart kings were not the conspirators that English Whig historians made them out to be. Though flawed in certain respects, they were defending the constitution they had inherited and had a duty to defend. Social and other changes were occurring, which neither the king nor the Puritan fanatics recognized.

Donald Livingston is a professor of philosophy at Emory University and president of the Abbeville Institute. He is the author of Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium: Hume's Pathology of Philosophy *(University of Chicago Press), which argues that Hume offered the first systematic critique of ideology.*

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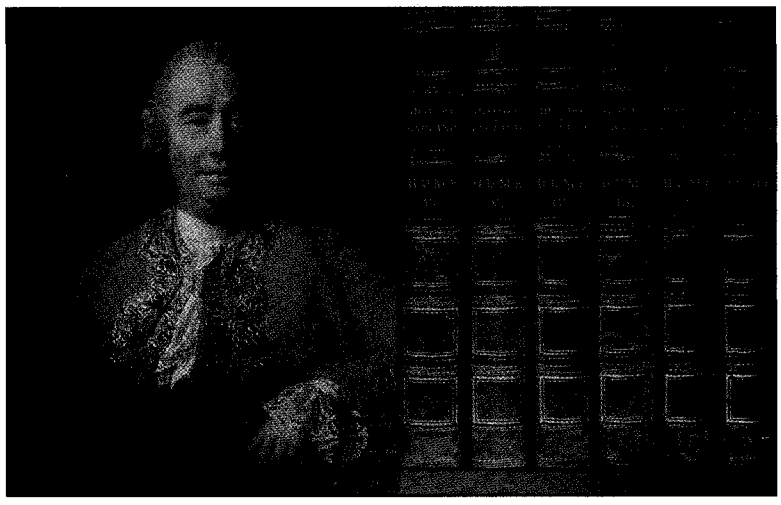
Hume, however, did not see the Civil War as a Manichaean struggle between fanatical Puritans and a virtuous monarch. Though unsparing in his criticism of Puritan fanaticism, he acknowledges that, without it, certain features of the 18th-century constitution of liberty would not have arisen. This does not morally justify Puritan fanaticism or the execution of Charles I. Rather, it is an instance of insights running throughout the *History*: that history is not merely the story of a struggle between good and evil; that goods are often inseparable from evils; and that the tragedy of history is not that evil drives out good, but that good often drives out good.

This complex moral-historical judgment was well expressed by Hume in a letter responding to the question of whether he was a Whig or Tory. He replied that his view of "things" was Whig, but that his view of "persons" was Tory. By "things" he meant the objective constitution of liberty. This he accepted along with the recognition that Puritan fanaticism helped bring it about. But as far as moral character goes, the king and the best of the Royalists were better subjects for emulation. The upshot of this was to teach the British people that the constitution of liberty is not a durable substance that has withstood conspiracies for over a thousand years. It is not old; it is new, unintended, and fragile.

Hume, following Cicero (whom Hume said was in his eye in all his writings), held that custom and tradition are the great guides of life. But Hume also held that custom must be "methodized and corrected" by reflection. And that is what he meant by reason: the critical reflections of a loyal and skillful participant in an inherited tradition, with all its tensions and conflicts. Hume's famous "attack on reason" is not an attack on reason as such, but on an abstract conception of reason emancipated from all custom and tradition. It is an attack on modern rationalism. Alasdair MacIntyre was closer to the truth when he said that Hume was the last Aristotelian—although it would be better to say that he was a latter-day Ciceronian humanist.

The second reason given by Whigs for Britain's success as a regime of liberty is the famous contract theory of John Locke. For Locke the constitution is not an ancient substance preserved by heroic patriots, but a timeless order available to all men: a rational contract freely entered into by the people to create a regime of limited government. The English constitution is not ancient; it is made by rational agents. The English are remarkable for having the character and courage actually to make such a regime, and this is what Voltaire admired. In the essay "Of the Original Contract," Hume refuted the contract theory of government as decisively as any philosophical theory can be refuted. In the *History* he refuted the contract theory of the British constitution not philosophically but with a convincing narrative that reveals how the constitution evolved over time as, in large part, the unintended result of human action. And so Hume could speak mischievously of "the wisdom of the constitution, or rather the concurrence of accidents."

The story of the rise of constitutional liberty in Britain is part of a larger story: the rise of civilization in Britain after the fall of Rome. Hume teaches that the rule of law is essential to the progress of civilization. From the rule of law comes security; from security comes curiosity; from curiosity comes the development of the arts and sciences, and these, he thinks, make possible higher moral refinements in law and character. At intervals in the *History* Hume sums up the progress each age has made in science, the arts, philosophy, law, and economic well-being. But Hume did not believe in a doctrine of inevitable progress, as did his friend Turgot and as do "progressive" thinkers down to our time, who still talk of being on the "right" or "wrong" side of history.



Melanie Anderson

If anything, Hume thought civilization might contain the seeds of its own destruction. As people become more civilized, they become more reflective. First a barbarous people speak a language correctly and innocently without any self-reflective knowledge of its grammar or syntax. As they become civilized, they learn to abstract the structure of the language and hold it up to contemplation. The same thing occurs in other practices. Over time, these abstract objects of contemplation come to be seen as more real than the practices from which they are abstractions. As people become more reflective, they become more philosophic. Philosophy is the ultimate form of reflection, because through it, the philosopher can conceive of himself as autonomous and entirely emancipated from the authority of all traditional practices. As such the philosopher is capable of imposing maxims and laws *a priori* out of his own radical freedom, undisciplined by the prejudices of common life.

If it cuts itself off from the practical wisdom of a loyal and skillful participant in a practice, the philosopher's critique is bound to be arbitrary and, hence, destructive. Moreover, the destruction will not be seen as a failure of the critique but as an evidence that the practice is failing to measure up to the ideal. So as civilization becomes more reflective, it becomes more philosophic, and every practice becomes susceptible to deconstruction by the

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hubris of the philosophic act. Hume described his own age sardonically as "this philosophic age"—the first age in which the philosophic act would be the dominant form of culture. This was quite different from the Greek and Roman worlds, in which the founding hero was the character of the age, or from Christendom, in which the saint was the character of the age. Hume saw that ideologues, or what he called "false philosophers," would be the characters of the modern age, and he presented Rousseau as an exemplar. In *The Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and in *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1741-52), Hume worked out the first systematic critique of modern ideologies, a critique that is unsurpassed and from which we still have much to learn.

This insightful understanding of modern ideological conflicts enabled Hume to see the Puritan revolution not as a moral struggle—an understandable resistance to royal tyranny—but as a world-inverting spiritual and intellectual pathology. When the French Revolution occurred, 13 years after Hume's death, many in Britain viewed it as a laudable moral act on behalf of liberty. Burke estimated that two thirds of the Anglican clergy were favorably disposed. But having read Hume's account of the Puritan revolution, Burke was able to view the French Revolution not as a limited moral resistance to tyranny but as a world-inverting ideology that had nothing to do with reform.

It is this recognition of a corrupt philosophical consciousness at the heart of modern culture that makes Hume's history of the Puritan revolution unique. Hume was unusual in viewing the religious conflicts of the 16th and 17th centuries as the result of corrupt philosophical theorizing about sacred tradition. Indeed, he went so far as to say that Puritanism resembled more a philosophical system than a religion. Why? Because in abandoning sacred tradition, the Puritan was left to determine for himself whether he had received a direct illumination from the divine. The hubris of philosophical autonomy (that the philosopher is the sole judge of the correctness of his thought about the real) is isomorphic with Puritan self-certification of divine illumination.

Hume also predicted that the more radical forms of Protestantism would eventually become secular and purely philosophic. Contemporary writers tend to view modern ideologies such as Marxism as "religions," as if only religion could be the source of such absurdity. Hume carefully distinguished between religion *as sacred tradition* and religion as shaped by philosophical theorizing. Modern religion, he said, "is nothing but a species of philosophy." So modern "religious wars" have their source not in religious tradition as such but in corrupt forms of the philosophical act mingled with religion. And ideological movements such as Marxism, communism, and liberalism are not "religions" but corrupt forms of the philosophic act structuring mass passions.

This insightful understanding of modern ideological conflicts enabled Hume to see the Puritan revolution not as a moral struggle—an understandable resistance to royal tyranny—but as a world-inverting spiritual and intellectual pathology. When the French Revolution occurred, 13 years after Hume's death, many in Britain viewed it as a laudable moral act on behalf of liberty. Burke estimated that two thirds of the Anglican clergy were favorably disposed. But having read Hume's account of the Puritan revolution, Burke was able to view the French Revolution not as a limited moral resistance to tyranny but as a world-inverting ideology that had nothing to do with reform. And he perceived this at the very beginning, before the Revolution had clearly exhibited those characteristics.

Burke was able to see what Hume's history of the Puritan revolution had prepared him to see. So did the French in 1789. Hume's *History* had been available in France for over 30 years and was popular. There were more editions in France than in England. Before, during, and after the Revolution, both the French right and the French left used Hume's history of the Puritan revolution to understand the events they were living through. The parallels frequently appeared in political speeches, pamphlets, and sermons: The Jacobins were Puritan ideologues; Louis XVI was Charles I; Robespierre or Napoleon was Cromwell. The Catholic right called Hume the "Scottish Bousset." French reviews of the *History* frequently praise its philosophic impartiality, and this reputation allowed valuable lessons to be drawn. A French reviewer said that it was "one of the finest pieces of history and philosophy that exists in any language, and perhaps the most impartial and most reasonable work that has come from the hand of man."

Louis XVI, who had met Hume when a boy and was a long-time student of the *History,* became obsessed with the parallels. Some have argued that, in trying to avoid repeating the errors of Charles, who forcibly resisted encroachments, King Louis exhibited a weakness that invited aggression and his own downfall. His secretary records that upon receiving the death sentence, he asked for the portion of Hume's *History* pertaining to Charles I, to read during his final days. And it appears that he modeled his defense and his comportment at the guillotine on Charles I's conduct as framed by Hume. So powerfully did Hume's account of the Puritan revolution illuminate the turmoil in France that Joseph de Maistre could title the last chapter of his book *Considérations sur la France* (1796) "Extract From a History of the French Revolution by David Hume."

The English Whig Catherine Macaulay had written

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a republican history of England (1763-83) to counter Hume's. Madame Roland was instrumental in promoting it in France as a check on Hume's counterrevolutionary influence. This was the same Madame Roland—the great champion of liberty–who, in rising to the scaffold to be executed in the name of the ideology of human rights, could lament, "O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!"

Hume's *History* helped to shape events in the French Revolution. Thomas Jefferson so feared its "Tory" influence in America that he banned it from the University of Virginia and replaced it with a hatchet job by John Baxter, who had abridged Hume's *History* and, as Jefferson said, "changed the text to what it should be, so that we may properly call it Hume's history republicanized." But Jefferson (who at times suffered from inhaling the fumes of ideology) had utterly misread his man, for Hume (to the dismay of his contemporaries) supported secession of the colonies as early as 1768—before the idea had even occurred to Jefferson. The *History* remained popular with Americans nonetheless. A reviewer of a new edition in the 1840's could exclaim that to say Hume's *History* is "not entitled to our favorable regard is like saying that Niagara is not a great spectacle or George Washington not a great patriot."

From its appearance in 1754 down to the 1890's, Hume's *History* was continuously in print. Young Winston Churchill learned English history from an abridged edition of it known as "The Student's Hume." It went out of print just as the aggressive, "progressive" ideological style of politics that Hume was the first to criticize systematically became the fashion. Today, the *History* is again being read, having been republished in 1983 by Liberty Fund.

I have stressed the philosophic side of the *History*—its story of the rise of civilization and the rule of law in Britain—but Hume does not neglect the moral evaluation of character. "The advantages found in history seem to be of three kinds," he wrote, "as it amuses the fancy, as it improves the understanding, and as it strengthens virtue." The latter, he thought, is the most important. Poets paint virtue in charming colors, but "they often become advocates for vice" as well. Philosophers, through world-inverting theorizing, easily end up denying "the reality of all moral distinctions." Historians "have been, almost without exception, the true friends of virtue, and have always represented it in its proper colours, however they may have erred in their particular judgments of particular persons." As an instance he takes Machiavelli who, when writing as a philosopher, treats "poisoning, assassination and perjury, as lawful arts of power," but, when writing as an historian, shows a keen "indignation against vice," and "a warm approbation of virtue." For this reason, among others, Hume thought that history, rather than philosophy, poetry, or fiction, should be at the core of an educated person's library. ◁▷

Cage

by William Baer

He hears her rattling the bars of their cage
(of their love) like a shattering deafening drum.
The whole house pulsates with her frustrated rage.
Surely the neighbors will call. The cops will come.
His head is throbbing; he needs to get away.
He steps outside, trying to decompress:
What is his perfect lover trying to say?
Does she want something *else*? Or *more*? Or *less*?
They'd built their lovers' cage with such precision
and mutuality. They were so clever,
calmly discussing every single decision,
building the bloody thing to last forever.
He enters the little chapel, sits in the cold,
and prays and prays the bars will hold.

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The Dean of Western Historians

Billington and the Frontier Culture

by Roger D. McGrath

It is usually difficult to choose only one author who is essential to the study of a particular subject. When it comes to the history of the frontier West, however, the choice is easy. Ray Allen Billington stands alone above all. He is the *sine qua non* of any course on frontier history. When reading Billington, you are getting two giants of the field in one. He was inspired by Frederick Jackson Turner, whose "frontier hypothesis" became the basis for Billington's life work. While Turner had the perspicacious insight to perceive the significance of the frontier in American history and to write about it in sweeping, almost poetical terms, it was Billington who wrote its history in a comprehensive narrative that is storytelling at its best. His *Westward Expansion* is a volume without peer as a history of the frontier from the time European settlers first set foot on what is today the United States to the closing of the wild and woolly Old West during the 1890's.

I was introduced to *Westward Expansion* while taking a course on the American West as an undergraduate at UCLA during the 1960's. I found the more than 900-page volume a page turner, which made it an anomaly among textbooks. Its 140 pages of bibliography are without rival and an indispensable research tool. The cloth-bound volume of densely packed text interspersed with well-crafted maps still sits on my library shelf. When in need, I go to it first. I have other textbooks on the American West, sent to me by publishers while I was teaching the course myself, but they all pale in comparison with Billington's magisterial work.

Each chapter of *Westward Expansion* not only grasps the big picture and larger significance of events but is full of individual characters and anecdotes that make history come alive. Moreover, it is the compelling story of what shaped our country and turned Europeans into Americans. Best of all, perhaps, Billington wrote and died before publishers required textbooks to be politically correct, which sacrifices history to cultural Marxism. The first edition of *Westward Expansion* appeared in 1949. I have the third edition. Billington was around to have a fourth edition published during the 1970's. A fifth and a sixth edition, edited by Martin Ridge, came out after Billington's death in 1981. I recommend one of the earlier editions. Martin Ridge is one of the best ever to write Western history, but, with the later editions, a new publisher insisted on dramatically reducing the size and scope of the volume, inserting some political correctness, and issuing it in paperback.

Ray Allen Billington earned his doctorate at Harvard and then taught at Clark University, Smith College, and, for many years, at Northwestern. By the time I entered UCLA, Billington was the Senior Research Associate at the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in nearby San Marino. The post at the Huntington gave him the opportunity to research and write to his heart's content. Billington had, by then, become an indefatigable advocate of Turner's frontier hypothesis, something that had gone in and out of fashion since Turner first propounded it in 1893 in a paper he presented to the American Historical Association at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Through reading Turner's paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," and through Billington, I became a Turnerian, a position that is anathema to most in academe today.

Turner was born in Portage, Wisconsin, which, in 1861, the year of his birth, was only a generation removed from the cutting edge of the frontier. Turner earned an undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin and then a doctorate in history at Johns Hopkins. While doing his graduate work, he was surprised to find his professors ignorant of the American frontier and dismissive of its influence. Europe explained America to them. Turner, however, had grown to maturity watching Germans, Irish, and Scandinavians become Americans, although still remaining identifiably German, Irish, and Scandinavian, and seeing upward mobility and social and political democracy in action. He could not help but contrast this with what he perceived as a more stratified society on the eastern seaboard. He began to think of the frontier as transformative, the principal agent involved in creating this new species—the American.

Without the frontier, he essentially said, we would have remained Europeans. The frontier, however, suddenly changed the man-to-land ratio. Peasants, working the land of aristocrats in Europe, became landowners themselves in America. Through hard work, determination, and their own talents, they prospered beyond their wildest dreams. This did not happen only once but generation after generation for nearly 300 years and stretched from coast to coast. Democracy sprang not from theoretical constructs but from the forests and prairies of America. Through this process traits developed that were peculiarly American or at least disproportionately represented in Americans. This made us a unique people, and our

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Contributing editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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march across the continent, a triumphal procession. It is easy to see why Frederick Jackson Turner is a bad name on college campuses today. If Turner is to be disparaged, though, those in academe must also disparage Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, E.L. Godkin, St. John de Crevecoeur, Alexis de Tocqueville, and others who made some of the same observations long before Turner.

There are legitimate criticisms of Turner: He tended to make sweeping generalizations, ignore details, and leave the hard work of organizing all his research into a comprehensive study to others. He enjoyed teaching his frontier course at Harvard, mentoring students, and presenting his views in essays. Turner did not seem greatly upset by his critics. Inspired by his own upbringing in the upper Midwest, he knew he had discovered a truth or at least had synthesized the observations of many great minds.

Billington, like Turner, earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin. He arrived at Harvard too late to study under Turner but did study under Frederick Merk, who had been one of Turner's students and then his colleague as a professor at Harvard. Merk's course on the frontier was Turnerian in nearly every respect. Billington later said that Merk's course inspired him to make the American frontier his life's work. It would be some years before Billington began to write *Westward Expansion*, but by then he had an understanding and knowledge of the frontier that surpassed those prominent historians he had worked under, including Frederick Paxson at Wisconsin and Frederick Merk and James Blaine Hedges at Harvard. Hedges had suggested the great volume to Billington as a cooperative project but was forced to retire from the work after preliminary drafts of three chapters. By the time Billington was finished, the book ran to a full 37 chapters and followed the frontier from the first Spanish, French, and English settlements through the closing of the frontier during the 1890's.

In the final chapter, a kind of addendum, Billington specifically addresses the frontier hypothesis and America's frontier heritage. After reading the first 36 chapters, it is difficult not to have come to the conclusions proffered by Billington in chapter 37. Nearly everything Turner claimed is supported by Billington's chapter-by-chapter march across the continent. While teaching at UCLA for 15 years, and an equal number of years at other universities, and while attending historical conferences, I would often run into anti-Turnerians. They were usually young professors. I would ask them if they had ever read *Westward Expansion*. Most would answer evasively, saying that they were familiar with it. When I pressed them, it became obvious that they had not read it. It also became obvious that they really did not know much about frontier history, putatively their field. They were good at postulating Marxist theory and superimposing theoretical models over the American West, but ask them about Old Bill Williams, a possibles sack, the Hawken rifle, Huge Glass, placer mining, the doctrine of prior appropriation, Tom Fitzpatrick, the Butterfield Overland Stage, Bear River Tom Smith, the Bozeman Trail, the Plummer gang, the Bodie 601, Shanghai Pierce, the Chisholm Trail, the Silver Kings, the Pleasant Valley War, the Ophir mine, square-set timbering, the Big Four, Lee McNelly, or the Regulators, and they would stare blankly.

Melanie Anderson

Billington eventually expanded the last chapter of *Westward Expansion* into a book, *America's Frontier Heritage*, which was published in 1963. In *America's Frontier Heritage*, Billington takes on all challengers to Turner's frontier hypothesis. Occasionally, he agrees with the critics, and I think that on all but one of those occasions he is right to do so. Most of the time, though, he staunchly and convincingly defends the hypothesis. It might sound as if the book is dryly analytical, but it, too, is an adventure, especially for those of us who are reading about our own people, attitudes, and behaviors. Much of it is a fun romp, revealing American traits and characteristics for good or ill—but they are ours. Several chapters are similar to the best parts of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Journey to America*. That should come as no surprise, since Billington relies heavily on what foreign travelers had to say about us, particularly their comments about life on the frontier. It also convinces me that writers such as Grady McWhiney, best known for *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South*, and James Webb, whose *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* I reviewed for *Chronicles*, must have read Billington.

Billington goes well beyond anecdotal observations by travelers, though, making use of studies by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, social psychologists, and demographers. It all builds to a convincing argument that nearly 300 years of frontiering experience created certain identifiable traits and behaviors not only in the frontiersmen themselves but in their descendants and in Americans in general. Billington does not—and neither did Turner—contend that these traits and behaviors are exclusively or uniquely American, although their critics delight in misstating their arguments in order to knock down straw men. Billington said that the characteristics were only more fully developed, even exaggerated, on the frontier and that they combined and reinforced each

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other, having what I might call in today's pharmaceutical language a synergistic effect.

One of the greatest controversies the frontier hypothesis has engendered is whether the frontier acted as a safety valve, as Turner argued, allowing those discontented with their lot in life in the urban East to move westward for opportunity and upward mobility. Such migration militated against the development of the rigid class system that prevailed in Europe. Studies have shown, however, that most families who packed up and trekked to the frontier were already living west of the urbanized east and were repeating a process that their ancestors had begun. City-dwelling families in New York, for example, rarely become farmers in Iowa. Thus, it is argued, the frontier was not a safety valve for urban masses. Moreover, farm families usually went west when they had cash reserves and a good stock of supplies, not when they were desperate. Billington is quick to concede these points and argues instead that the frontier was an indirect safety valve—that farm families moved west rather than off the land and into the cities, where they would have intensified competition for jobs and services. He also argues that the frontier was a psychological safety valve: City dwellers thought that, if things got too bad, they could always escape to the West. Moreover, says Billington, the West was a resources safety valve: Precious metals, timber, coal, iron, and grazing lands allowed America to develop rapidly and to do so without seeking colonies overseas.

I only take exception to Billington so quickly conceding the first point concerning the safety valve. I grant that studies have shown that farm families in the East were the ones who tended to become farm families in the West, and that they tended to do so in good times rather than bad. However, every study cited looks at families, rather than individuals, and concentrates on farmers. There were thousands of individuals who yearly left eastern cities and towns for the West, sometimes to work on farms but most of the time to trap beaver, cut timber, build railroads, pan for gold, herd cattle, deliver freight, fight Indians, guard bullion shipments, haul ore, survey land, dig wells, string fences, enforce the law, flout the law, or a thousand and one other things. Richard King, who became the greatest cattle baron of the Old West, began life in New York City as the son of Irish immigrants. When his parents died, he was made an apprentice. He ran away when barely in his teens by stowing away on a ship. By the time he died, he owned a ranch of nearly a million acres in Texas. Harry Longabaugh was born in a small town just west of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. He grew up reading dime novels about cowboys and gunfighters. He left home at 15, headed for Wyoming. We have known him ever since as the Sundance Kid. And so it goes for thousands more.

Billington's chapter on the social aspects of frontier democracy in *America's Frontier Heritage* is my favorite and perhaps captures the essence of being an American like no other. "There is nothing in America," Billington quotes a European visitor as saying, "that strikes a foreigner so much as the real republican equality existing in the Western States, which border on the wilderness." The mountain men, sourdoughs, cowboys, teamsters, and others judged men on their individual merits—not on titles, lineage, or wealth. As a cowboy told a supercilious scion of British nobility, "You may be a son of a lord back in England, but that ain't what you are out here." When another British nobleman insisted on being addressed as "Esquire," the cowboys laughed and said that they would be calling him "Charlie." "Superiority," noted an English traveler, "is yielded to men of acknowledged talent alone." A titled Englishman traveling through the cattle country of the northern High Plains brought a bathtub with him. Upon ordering a hired packer to fill it, the frontiersman instead drew a revolver and shot the tub full of holes, telling the nobleman that he now had a shower. When an aristocratic visitor asked a Wyoming cowboy if his "master" was at home, the drover replied angrily, "the son of Baliel ain't been born yet."

Another Billington work that is essential to any student of the frontier is *The Far Western Frontier 1830-1860*, which was first published in 1956. In colorful, flowing narrative Billington takes the reader to New Mexico on the Santa Fe Trail, into the Rockies with the mountain men, over the Oregon Trail with the pioneers, south of the border with American troops during the Mexican War, to the Great Salt Lake Basin with the Mormons, to California with the forty-niners, and to gold and silver strikes throughout the West. He captures the spirit of the times and the character of the people. It simply does not get any better.

If you have time to read only one author on the frontier West, then Ray Allen Billington is the one. ◁

Tróia
by William Baer

Last week she stopped in the crowded mall and said,
"Take me to Portugal, and I'll be fine."
So now they sit on the beach, staring ahead,
content, sipping their moscatel sweet wine,
talking about the Fado singers last night,
Camões's empty tomb, the olive trees
of Bocage's Setúbal, and feeling "just right":
enjoying each other, the beach, and the ocean breeze.
"Some sonnets?" she asks. So he reads "*Amor*
é um fogo" as the sun begins to sink,
then "*Armânia*," then several more.
"That's more like it," she says, taking a drink,
then smiles in the fading Lusitanian sun,
"Kiss me, love. Then read me another one."

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George Garrett

1929-2008

by Fred Chappell

A few years ago, an editor at *The Oxford American* telephoned to request that I write a piece for that journal about the Calder Willingham-Fred Chappell feud. I struggled to recall the brief episode wherein I corresponded with that screenwriter (*The Graduate*) and pop novelist (*Eternal Fire*) about some obscure detail. By an equally obscure complication, my friend George Garrett, revered poet, fiction writer, and essayist, had been a third party in the exchange.

"There's nothing to write about," I told the editor.

"Are you sure?"

As best I could remember, Mr. Willingham had got it into his head that I was one of these hypermodern, artsy writers who filled his pages with radical political slogans and graphic sex scenes. Without knowing my work, he accused me of lack of decorum. I thought this odd talk from the screenwriter who, in *One-Eyed Jacks*, had given the world Marlon Brando's immortal line: *"You scum-sucking pig!"* When I relayed this thought, Mr. Willingham replied that sometimes writers have to resort to irony.

"There's no real subject matter," I told the editor. "It was just a couple of cranky old farts going on at each other. Do you remember Doc and Festus in the *Gunsmoke* TV series?"

"I wish you would write it up," he said. "George Garrett was here last week, and he told the story of you and Willingham. It went on for about an hour, and it was the funniest story I ever heard. People were rolling on the floor—literally. We laughed till we cried. At one point we begged him to stop so we could catch breath."

"I wish I'd been there," I said.

Marcel Proust and Thomas Mann and Émile Zola are great novelists, but it is perhaps inaccurate to say that they are great storytellers. Jack London, H.G. Wells, and P.G. Wodehouse are grand storytellers, but we may debate whether they are great novelists. Cervantes, John Bunyan, and Mark Twain would seem to fulfill the requirements of both categories.

Other names will proliferate if we discuss the matter further, but I would note that if a writer were free to choose one of the two initial categories he or she would prefer to fill, George Garrett would enlist, with his cheery grin, among the storytellers.

University of Virginia (archival photo)

His most widely known novel, *Death of a Fox*, an intricate, many-minded, lyrical account of the last days of Sir Walter Raleigh, approaches greatness, I believe, and its immediate sequel, *The Succession*, is regarded the superior performance by many of Garrett's faithful readers. These are not story novels in the manner of *Robinson Crusoe* or *The Sea Wolf*; they are novels made up of smaller stories that interweave and layer together to produce unified, powerful effects. In short, a little like *Don Quixote*.

In fact, in method and tone and to some degree in intention, George Garrett's novels imitate the way he told stories orally, with a bourbon in one hand while he marched around his host's living room. His voice was soft with an unlocalized Southern accent, and there was a smile in it that matched the smile on his face. The story he had begun—about a bear in a football helmet, let's say—had first digressed into an account of a one-eyed boxing coach

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George Garrett was a contributing editor to Chronicles.
Fred Chappell, author of numerous works of verse and fiction, was Poet Laureate of North Carolina from 1997 to 2002.

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who taught the art of gentle manners, then into the story of secret signals during a football game, then into the discovery of empty mirror frames in Richmond Castle, and finally to the reason the bear was head-geared in such sportive fashion. Digression was his favorite mode, and he made it as expressive a ramble as did Rabelais, and he would quote Montaigne in its defense.

His pages resound with the same confidence as his oral stories. He knew that, once begun, his tale would entrance and his power was in his charm and his charm, spoken or written, lay in his use of voice.

Or *voices*, as I should say, for he entered into the voice of another, whether of an acquaintance or of an invented character, with the ease and facility of one who spent most of his life listening, with respectful attention, to others. He once said that his head was filled with a "wash" of voices. In that particular sense, all the voices were his own because of the manner in which he heard them. Then, when he wrote, the natural way the phrases sat on the page made them sound like George Garrett was saying them with a genial bourbon in his left hand while he buttoned and unbuttoned his tweed jacket with his right.

Maybe an example will aid.

In 1993 I published a collection of 100 epigrams called *C*. For the Proem to the book, I adapted lines from the Roman satirist:

In such a book as this,
The poet Martial says,
Some of the epigrams
Shall have seen better days,
And some are hit-or-miss;
But some—like telegrams—
Deliver intelligence
With such a sudden blaze
The shine can make us wince.

I understood that my adaptation did violence to the original, but I hoped to set a tone for the whole book. I delivered a copy of *C* to George in person. He opened it to "Proem," scanned it, and said, "I once tried my hand at this epigram." He was surprised and visibly pleased when I quoted his version:

To the reader: when you look
inside, you're bound to find here
some good verses, some middling, and I fear
plenty of bad ones. What can I say?
Buddy, it's the only way
a poet can make a book.

If a reader consults the Latin, she might be surprised to find that George's version—even with the casual rhyming, the variable line length, and the informal diction ("middling"; "Buddy")—is closer to the literal than is mine. Another poet might approach the job thinking, *If I were*

University of Virginia (archival photo)

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Martial, this is how I would say it in English. For George the approach was: *I came across this nifty little verse by Martial, and I pass it along to you. No attempt at persona, no freezing of the nimble little gambol into my stiff metric—just the lines themselves in the easiest of manners.*

"Seemingly effortless": We read this reviewer's cliché hundreds of times in our lives, but it rarely describes accurately the work at hand. Sometimes it whitewashes facile or sloppy execution. But for George Garrett's poetry, it is accurate and marks a quality almost always characteristic: I speak again of *charm*.

Not too many other poets can manage this very special tone. Poems by Rodney Jones and Henry Taylor come to mind. Many of the pages of R.H.W. Dillard, George's close friend, resonate in harmony, but the exact timbre remains uniquely Garrett's.

It is, of course, the art of concealing artfulness, the strategy that seems no strategy, the clear-eyed gaze, the direct utterance devoid of indirection: "The captain pulled his car off the road and got out and opened up a map."

With that sentence begins the short story, "Unmapped Country," in which the commanding officer of a soldier killed in a training accident is sent to tell the boy's father what happened and why. Reading it again, I see for the first time how the writer has avoided every fancy literary temptation that might waylay him, trusting to character, situation, and place to offer all the drama and thematic point necessary. But nothing is simple, and the complications that arise involve three members of the family and the captain himself in separate, personal ways. Delivering the account of the son's death to the family is the hardest duty the service-worn captain has had to complete, and he falls back on the immemorial words of every recruit's First Sergeant to get him through it: "You ain't got nothing to worry about. All you got to do is keep picking 'em up and putting 'em down."

George once told me "Unmapped Country" was autobiographical. While in the Army, he had been assigned the task of bringing the same terrible news to an isolated, hill-country farm family. When I asked him if he resorted to the discipline he had learned as a recruit, he paused before shaking his head. "I don't remember how I got home after talking to the old man," he said. "I just put in the First Sergeant's dialogue to end the story."

But those of us who knew the man who mustered out of the Army as a Master Sergeant, and who was tempted to make a career in military service, recognize unquestioning steadfastness of devotion to duty as one of the principal tenets of George's personal credo, a credo that he brought to writing, teaching, and the other areas of his life.

He wrote incessantly but not, I think, compulsively. He had rejected an athletic career as a boxer, an Army career, and the ordinary footnote-strewing academic one in favor of making literature. Once his choice was settled, so was his regimen. He would write whenever and wherever he could, despite all distraction. He would respond to every request for copy from every quarter. There was more than a little of the Christian stoic in his nature, and he was aided, supported, and abetted by his wife, the lovely, bright, and noble Susan.

But the various careers in which he engaged lent him subjects and themes about which to publish—by my very rough count—ten novels, seven volumes of short stories, eight of poetry, nine of nonfiction, two plays, and two screenplays. This output is even more prodigious when we take into account the enormous teaching load he carried at various colleges and universities, the scores of engaging readings and lectures he presented in every part of the nation, and the dozens of books he edited. Add to this curriculum the untellable number of young writers for whom he served as mentor and guide by helping them to find university and editorial positions and by setting them on the road to publication of their work, and you outline a literary life that is monumental in size and intensity.

Taken in the whole, his importance is incalculable. In the field of Southern letters, only Louis Rubin, teacher, writer, and founder of Algonquin Books, can be considered his equal in influence. One may guess at something of George's position as *force majeur* by going to such collections of essays as *Southern Excursions* and *Going to See the Elephant*. There we find pieces on the hallowed ones—F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eudora Welty, James Dickey, *et al.*—but also on writers whom lesser critics forget or scorn. He is finely perceptive about William Goyen, William Hoffman, Jesse Hill Ford, Madison Jones, and many another worthy whose work he judged to have been unjustly slighted.

I have little doubt that when literary history takes stock of the important writers of his generation it will single out figures like William Styron, Peter Taylor, Reynolds Price, Elizabeth Spencer, Charles Wright, and the rest of the well-hailed lineup. George stands as a figure something like Thornton Wilder, perhaps—a writer so well known he has become almost invisible. Or like a statue in a public park, seen so often and in so many various lights that it seems more a part of the weather than of the landscape.

But once it is removed, we see that no other figure can or ever will refill that space.

George Garrett's Awards and Honors

Sewanee Review fellowship (1958)
American Academy in Rome fellowship (1958)
Ford grant, for drama (1960)
National Endowment for the Arts grant (1967)
Contempora award (1971)
Guggenheim fellowship (1974)
American Academy award (1985)
New York Public Library Literary Lion award (1988)
T. S. Eliot Award (1989)
PEN/Malamud Award for short fiction (1990)
Aiken-Taylor Award (1999)
Poet Laureate of Virginia (2002-2006)
Lifetime Achievement Award from the Library of Virginia (2004)
Cleanth Brooks Medal for Lifetime Achievement from the Fellowship of Southern Writers (2005)
Carole Weinstein Poetry Prize (2006)

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by Taki Theodoracopulos

Send in the Clowns

Karagiozis is a mythical Greek character created sometime during the Ottoman occupation (1455-1827). He manages to outwit the Turk at every turn by being funny, dishonest at times, and a very quick thinker. For example, he discusses a business with a Turk and proposes an equal sharing of the wealth. "What's yours is mine," he tells the sleepy Turk, "and what's mine is mine." The dumb one agrees and goes back to sleep. The Greek audiences laugh their heads off.

As a child, I used to watch Karagiozis as an animated character in outdoor theatres. The name Karagiozis now means a clown, somebody not to be taken seriously. But the recent warrant for the arrest of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, by a prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, reminded me of my childhood idol, this great mythical con man.

Bashir is a gangster who is responsible for murder, extermination, forcible transfer, torture, rape, attacks on civilians, and pillaging towns and villages. He masterminded a plan to destroy three of the largest ethnic groups in Darfur by using the Sudanese armed forces, the Janjaweed militias, and the entire government apparatus to target civilians. The charges state that over 35,000 people have been killed, 2.7 million displaced, and rape has been a common tactic, with one third of rape victims being children. Nice guys, these Sudanese. The genocide charge is, of course, the most serious, as far as the ICC is concerned.

Mind you, *genocide* is a word much abused by the bureaucrooks who run what pundits refer to as the international community. Milosevic was accused of genocide after the Clinton, Albright & Holbrooke gang tore up the agreements reached with him at Dayton. After Serbia was bombed for 70 days and nights, he was kidnapped, sent to The Hague, and tried on charges of genocide he had absolutely nothing to do with. Conveniently, he dropped dead from a heart attack, most likely brought on by the refusal of his jailers to provide him with the necessary drugs. I say conveniently, because even that kangaroo court was having trouble connecting him with genocide. And here is where my childhood friend Karagiozis comes in. If Bashir is a murdering monster—which he is—what about other monsters, and why hasn't the ICC gone after them? Like Karagiozis, we in the West now charge anyone who doesn't play ball with us with crimes against humanity, while turning a blind eye toward the crimes against humanity we and our allies are committing. *What's yours is mine, and what's mine is mine.*

In September 2007, *El País* published transcripts of a meeting held in Crawford, Texas, between George W. and then Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar. A deal had been reached with Arab leaders and Aznar, which gave the option to Saddam to leave Iraq—most likely for Egypt—with a billion-dollar bribe to help him in his old age. Saddam was willing, but Bush said absolutely not. Bush wanted war more than the removal of Saddam. That option not only would have averted war but would have created a transitional government under the United Nations, which—even in its worst possible form—would have been a thousand times better for everyone involved than the present one.

So, why hasn't the ICC charged Bush, Cheney, Wolfowitz, and Feith with genocide, aggressive war, forcible transfer, and pillaging cities, towns, and villages? Why hasn't Richard Perle been charged with crimes against humanity for his lies leading up to the war? Goebbels, after all, would have been tried and hanged, although he was only a propaganda minister. Perle is our Goebbels, as are Frum, Kristol, and Podhoretz, and the rest of that ghastly *galère*.

Had Dubya agreed to the "exile scenario," millions of Iraqis would not have been deracinated, hundreds of thousands would not have lost their lives, and thousands of our own military would still be around. Not to mention our wounded and crippled for life. So whom do we arrest first? Bashir or Bush? The latter has much more blood on his hands. And if the moral force and political validity of the rule of law emanate from a court that can tell the difference between right and wrong, what about Israel's leaders being charged with genocide and crimes against humanity for the last 60 years to boot? Recently, a Palestinian woman videotaped an everyday happening in the occupied territories—four Israeli settlers clubbing her family almost to death because they refused to leave their tiny patch of land. (Israeli human-rights groups not only published the pictures but went after the brutal attackers.) The Israeli army kills civilians indiscriminately following a Palestinian attack, and then promises to investigate. Although thousands of Palestinian civilians have died, I don't know of many Israeli soldiers who have been convicted.

I could go on and on—Robert Mugabe, Theodor Obiang of Equatorial Guinea (reputed to eat his victims, he has ten billion dollars in the United States and a lobbyist in D.C.), the majority of African despots and Arab leaders. And what about Turks killing Kurds, or that smiling cobra Tony Blair, who knew there were no WMDs but for self-publicity and self-importance sent in the troops? Let's put them all in the dock by alphabetical order, hence Bashir goes just before Blair and Bush. Anything else is Karagiozis. ©

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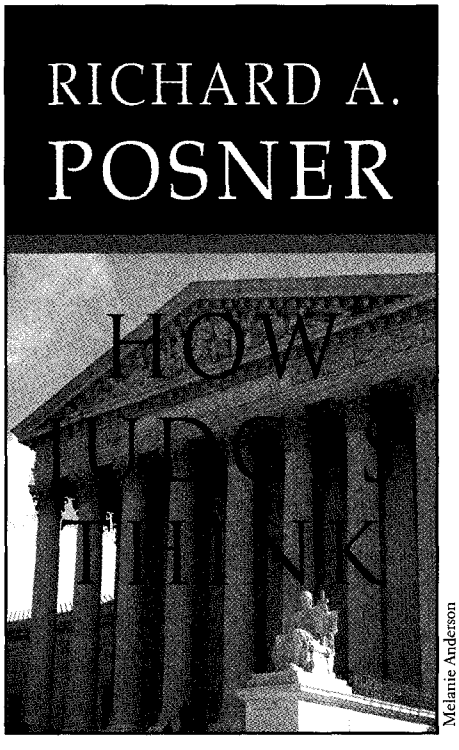
How Posner Thinks

by Stephen B. Presser

"The law is good, if a man use it lawfully."

—1 Timothy 1:8

How Judges Think
by Richard A. Posner
Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press; 387 pp., $29.95



Melanie Anderson

Richard Posner is one of the greatest judges never to have sat on the Supreme Court of the United States. A distinguished professor at the University of Chicago, a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit for 25 years, and chief judge of that Court for seven years, he might have expected by dint of sheer brilliance alone to have been elevated to the highest bench in the land. Probably, his nomination could not have been confirmed by the Senate. Posner once candidly observed that our law permits killing or wounding people to protect a property interest, and he has toyed with the notion that putative adoptive parents should be allowed to purchase babies on the open market. Posner's provocative demeanor is on display once more in his latest book. He is surely one of the most prolific authors (if not the single-most) among sitting federal judges, having published dozens of monographs. *How Judges Think* may be one of his most accessible works. It is also one of the most intriguingly ironical, given its theme that judges not only are inescapably political, but *should* be.

American judges do not, Posner argues, always do what most Americans, and most American judges, *believe* they do: that is, apply the Constitution, statute law, and precedent to the facts brought before them, and thus settle cases with full neutrality and according to the boasted claim that ours is a government of laws, not of men. Rather, the legal materials in many cases point in opposing directions, and the judge, in choosing among those directions, must perform a legislative or—to use the word that Posner often substitutes for legislative—"political" function. That American judges have frequently engaged in legislative decisions will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the Supreme Court's behavior during the last 70 years, in which time it has rewritten the Constitution to curtail the discretion of state and local authorities, to expand the reach of the power of the federal government, to enact its own code of criminal procedure to regulate state and local police, to remove the influence of religion and traditional morality from the public square, and to discover in the Bill of Rights protections for abortion and consensual homosexual acts.

Many, if not most, of these actions could never have been accomplished by the federal or state legislatures, owing to an absence of popular support. Thus, the undemocratic role of the Supreme Court in altering the Constitution has for decades been a rallying cry of the GOP: Republican presidents from Richard M. Nixon to George W. Bush have promised to nominate judges and justices who would "interpret" rather than "make" laws. That is wrong, Posner claims, because our "antique" Constitution simply does not provide for the needs of 21st-century American society; its amendment procedures are too cumbersome to allow the people's representatives to renovate it; our legislatures, dominated by special interests, refuse to take measures necessary for the common good; our political parties are too disorganized for effective action. The inescapable task of modernizing the law falls to the judges.

So much, in short, for republican

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(or democratic) government. This sacrifice does not much bother Posner, because he thinks American judges, on the whole, do a decent job of stumbling toward correct legislative solutions, an activity that he also describes as "pragmatism"—a kind of judicial "can-do," uniquely American in spirit, which judges more or less happily conceal through the judicially agreed-upon vocabulary of "legalism," the notion that judges are bound by constitution, statute, and precedent. Legalism is, after all, taught in the law schools and tested on bar exams, and our judges (all of whom have been lawyers first) are adept at the subterfuge. Legalism, for Posner, is window dressing. The real purpose of this book is to make it possible for judges not to have to pretend.

Posner appears to be writing for his fellow law professors, pleading with them to educate lawyers who understand how judges really think and to begin, at last, to tailor their briefs and their arguments to what actually concerns them. Good judges, says Posner, are forward-looking and want to know the consequences of their decisions, not what legislatures or courts have said about the problem in the past. Thus, the plethora of citations to cases, statutes, and regulations with which advocates now pepper their submissions to courts should be radically revised in order to incorporate social-science data and theories from economists, statisticians, sociologists, political scientists, and psychologists into legal arguments. This is what Posner himself has done in his books, lectures, and legal decisions over the past few decades. It is about time, he thinks, that the profession catches up.

Posner applauds the fact that some law schools have begun to appoint political scientists to their faculties and implies that they should be joined by the kinds of "sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators" that would have made Edmund Burke blanch. I have mixed feelings about this. One of the political scientists whom Posner cites frequently, Lee Epstein, is a brilliant teacher and researcher and a leader of the law faculty here at Northwestern, though she has never earned a law degree. Northwestern University has the highest percentage of tenure-track law-school faculty holding social science Ph.D.'s in the country and is in the process of requiring all of its students to take courses involving accounting, statistics, finance, and organizational behavior. Similar developments are under way at Harvard, Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, and several other institutions. We are, in short, about to turn out the type of lawyer that Posner wants: legal advocates trained in the methods and insights of the social sciences.

There is more to law than social science, however. And there is a real danger, if the legal academy rushes to embrace empirical social science, that those entering the profession will lose the sense of romance that has always surrounded the practice of law—the idea that to be a lawyer is a calling, much as the ministry or the military once was. Public service is not absent from the world of Posner, and he does observe that the best judges still understand that. But what is missing is a deep faith that at the core of American law there remains a body of transcendent principles of what used to be called natural law—a set of values, as Cicero once remarked, the same in Rome and Athens, universally valid all over the world and at all times, accepted by Aquinas and Aristotle, Sir William Blackstone, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton. That is what Burke believed, too; and if Russell Kirk was correct, Burke's belief in natural law is the foundation for the Anglo-American conservative tradition.

Instead of embracing the "permanent things," Posner may see them as an illusion, and he seems to go out of his way to argue that the staunchest defenders of "originalism" in the present day, men such as Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, and perhaps Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito, are hypocrites, if not naive fools. And it must be said that Posner is equally dismissive of the muddle-headed principles of justices such as Anthony Kennedy, who borrows legal measures (such as the abolition of the death penalty for juveniles and the decriminalization of homosexual acts) from European jurisdictions, and Stephen Breyer, whose concept of "active liberty" permits him to stretch the Constitution essentially to implement much of the preferred policy of Senate liberals. Similarly, Posner dismisses what he calls the "Yale School of Constitutional Interpretation," exemplified by Akil Amar and Bruce Ackerman, which posits a power in the Court during extraordinary times essentially to amend the Constitution, in a departure that Posner correctly declares to be "completely unmoored from text and precedent."

There is, undeniably, a bracingly brutal honesty in Posner's thinking, while, even in his belief that judges' work is inevitably political, he is something other than politically correct. Of America's most treasured Middle Eastern ally, he writes:

> Israel is an immature democracy, poorly governed; its political class is mediocre and corrupt; it floats precariously in a lethally hostile Muslim sea—and it really could use a constitution.

Posner expresses these remarks in justifying the behavior of Israel's Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak, who made constitutional doctrine out of whole cloth, an expedient Posner suggests might have been necessary in Israel at the time but is indefensible here in the United States. Apparently, there are limits to what Posner believes politically adept, socially scientific, pragmatic American judges can do, although he never clearly delineates those limits. He hints, though, that there are times when "pragmatism," his preferred judicial strategy, dictates adherence to "legalism," the belief in the rule of law. Perhaps if he listened harder, following the example of his hero, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Posner might hear an "echo of the infinite, a glimpse of [law's] unfathomable process, a hint of the universal law."

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Perspectives on RPW

by Tom Landess

Robert Penn Warren: Genius Loves Company
edited by Mark Royden Winchell
Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press; 122 pp., $19.95

The late Mark Winchell's recently published *Robert Penn Warren: Genius Loves Company* is a collection of essays focusing on Warren's close associations and literary affinities. Warren was known as a kind and generous man who encouraged other writers in their work, helped those in need, and nurtured fragile friendships over a lifetime, sometimes with people whose political views he rejected. Whether genius loves company is debatable. Faulkner certainly didn't. Neither did Emily Dickinson. As this book proves, Warren clearly did.

Some of the essays—written by divers hands—dwell on personal relationships. Others deal almost exclusively with similarities in theme and technique. Most split the difference. All, however, have their roots in biography, the genre that Mark Winchell understood better than almost anyone else.

Winchell's own contribution is perhaps the most useful because it examines Warren's closest and most important literary friendship—with critic Cleanth Brooks. The two met at Vanderbilt, renewed their friendship as students at Oxford, taught together at LSU, were cofounders of the original *Southern Review*, and ended up on the faculty of Yale University, where they remained close friends and collaborators until Warren died in 1989.

Here was a friendship that flourished as few others, despite differences in temperament and contrary opinions on the most basic issues. Warren was a self-described atheist. Brooks was a devout Christian, an Episcopalian who left that church when it abandoned theological orthodoxy. Warren was known as a political "liberal," and Brooks was a lifelong conservative. Water and oil.

Yet, as Winchell points out, they arranged to pursue their academic careers together and collaborated on some of the most influential textbooks in the history of literary studies—*Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction*, to name but two. These texts taught students (and their professors) that a poem or short story had a formal integrity all its own, that it should not become the mere instrument of ideology or personal taste. In these texts, Brooks and Warren taught the "New Criticism" to several generations of serious readers.

In his essay, Winchell quotes passages that reveal not only the way their extraordinary collaboration worked but also the influence that Cleanth Brooks had on Warren's poetry. In summary, Winchell quotes the following passage from a letter Warren wrote to Brooks acknowledging the debt:

> You can't imagine how much I owe you about poetry—on two counts. Our long collaborations always brought something new and eye-opening to me, seminal notions for me, often couched in some seemingly incidental or casual remark. One of the happiest recollections I have is that of the long sessions of work on UP [*Understanding Poetry*]—not to mention earlier and later conversations. The other count has to do with the confidence you gave me about my own efforts. I'm sure that you were over-generous, but even allowing for that, it still meant something fundamental to me. I have often wanted to say something like this to you, but I know that you'd give me an embarrassed shrug and disclaimer. Anyway I can say it now without your interruption.

"Warren, Bellow and the Changing Tides," written by Joseph Scotchie, may be the most surprising essay in the volume. Here Scotchie shows his readers two lions in winter, angered by the excesses that an earlier, more civilized liberalism had spawned. As they grew older, Warren and Bellow viewed with growing disdain the leftist iconoclasm of the 1960's and 70's, with its affection for the subliterary and its anti-intellectual undercurrent. After examining the latest Yale curriculum guide, Warren told a friend, "One . . . seminar apparently consisted only on reading contemporary pornography. I suspect it was the first time in history kids got credit for reading dirty books." He criticized the New Deal, which he came to believe had brought about a "weakening" of the American spirit. And, to the horror of his left-leaning friends, he actually praised Jefferson Davis in print. Indeed, he and Eleanor Clark, his leftist wife, began to have friendly arguments about politics, she calling him "you old Agrarian," he calling her "you old Trotskyite." (In 1937, Clark served as a translator for Trotsky and was married briefly to his secretary.)

Bellow likewise refused to follow the New Left down the road to political anarchy. He deplored the 1960's attack on the academy, ridiculed multiculturalism ("Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? The Proust of the Papuans? I'd be glad to read them"), and told a reporter that political correctness was

> a serious threat to political health, because where there is free speech without any debate what you have is a corruption of free speech which very quickly becomes demagoguery. It's a bad moment in the history of the country.

In "Robert Penn Warren and Albert Russell Erskine, Jr.: A Sixty-Year Friendship," James A. Grimshaw, Jr., highlights the important role that Erskine played in Warren's career and in 20th-century American literature. Erskine met Warren at Southwestern College in Memphis. Erskine was a student, and Warren a young instructor. When Warren joined Brooks at LSU and founded the *Southern Review*, Erskine came along and became business manager of the magazine, as

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well as a third reader of manuscripts.

For Erskine, that experience marked the beginning of a long and highly successful career as an editor, handling such important works as Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Warren's *World Enough and Time*. In demonstrating the importance of Erskine to Warren, Grimshaw quotes lengthy passages from the letters of both men, including an exchange in which Erskine makes suggestions for the revision of Warren's fourth novel.

In a lengthy essay, H.R. Stoneback discusses similarities in the works of Warren and Elizabeth Madox Roberts, both of whom wrote about early Kentucky and two of its most historically significant residents, Daniel Boone and John James Audubon.

In "Warren and Pasinetti: A Study in Friendship," William Bedford Clarke chronicles Warren's extraordinary kindness toward Italian writer Pier Maria Pasinetti, an outspoken anti-fascist who was trapped in Italy at the outset of World War II and had good reason to fear the Mussolini government. Warren worked unceasingly to rescue Pasinetti and, in later years, promoted both his academic and literary careers.

Tony Morris documents Warren's early influence on Robert Lowell at LSU and then examines similarities and differences in their poetry. In these perceptive textual analyses, Morris provides valuable insights into the thematic concerns of both poets.

Robert Penn Warren and Ralph Ellison (*Invisible Man*) first became friends while both were in residence at the American Academy in Rome. Steven D. Ealy explores their friendship and their continuing dialogue on race and its role in history. Ellison's famous interview of Warren in *The Paris Review* was an outgrowth of this friendship and serves as a showcase for Warren's brilliance as a conversationalist and as a social critic.

Robert Cheeks examines the friendship and literary achievement of Warren and William Styron in the light of their common Southern heritage. As Cheeks puts it, "Theirs was a mutual understanding that even though a generation separated them, they shared a unique Southern historical and cultural heritage that resisted the assault of modernity."

Daniel Cross Turner departs from the theme of Warren's Southern sensibilities to explore the friendship of Warren and James Dickey, both of whom were highly acclaimed poets and novelists. However, the main thrust of Turner's essay is his remarkable exploration of "primitivism" in the works of the two.

The last essay in the volume—Joseph Millichap's discussion of Warren's influence on TV scriptwriter David Milch (*Hill Street Blues*, *NYPD Blue*, *Deadwood*), a friend and former student, demonstrates the role of "high culture" in shaping popular entertainment, a phenomenon as rare as the Po'ouli bird.

As is usually the case with such a collection, all contributions are not of equal merit. In particular, some of the technical and thematic comparisons require an extraordinary exercise of imagination, if not a willing suspension of disbelief. Yet—as Winchell obviously understood—each essay earns its place in the collection by telling readers something important about Warren that they didn't already know.

As a whole the book is a valuable addition to the body of biographical and critical work on a writer whose poetry and fiction will surely be read a century from now. The history of American literature is filled with goblins, trolls, and three-headed monsters—men and women you wouldn't want in your neighborhood, much less in your family. For this reason, it is nice to know that every so often the republic of letters turns out a normative figure like Robert Penn Warren, someone you could confidently take home to meet your mother-in-law.

Contributing editor Tom Landess is a retired English professor who has published a number of books and articles, a few of which have appeared under his name.

Evolving the Sensitive Soldier

by Clark Stooksbury

The Warrior Image: Soldiers in American Culture From the Second World War to the Vietnam Era
by Andrew J. Huebner
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 371 pp., $24.95

World War II cast an enormous cultural shadow over American life. It provided a backdrop for novels, television shows, and—especially—movies. Like many boys who grew up in the decades after the war, I read about the conflict, traced my fingers across maps illustrating the U.S. island-hopping campaign in the Pacific, watched and rewatched war movies, and constructed models of P-51 Mustangs and B-17 bombers.

The Warrior Image examines how American culture viewed fighting men in the shadow of World War II, starting in the 1940's when the war was in progress and running through 1978, when the Vietnam War films *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter* were released. Andrew Huebner relied on press accounts, works of fiction, movies, and other media in writing his book. He proposes that, while the perception of the soldier evolved over 30 years in the United States, the warrior image created during the "good war" had much in common with that of the war in Vietnam, even though public perception of the two wars was (and remains) entirely different. He credits the Korean War with having played an important role in the evolution of that image.

The film industry, which began making movies about the U.S. role in World War II shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, was hugely influential in shaping the image of the war and its combatants. Huebner focuses on movies that show the struggles of the common soldier, such as *The Story of G.I. Joe*, based on the columns of Ernie Pyle. He claims that Pyle "had

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become cynical about the war yet [he] steadfastly sympathized with the GI, writing dispatches that portrayed the impact of battle without sentimentality." *The Story of G.I. Joe* is true to Pyle's vision, depicting combat troops in Italy living in squalor and grimly struggling to survive. Instead of "heroic platitudes and lofty purposes," there were "mud, blood, and the sheer monotony of the infantryman's life."

Huebner calls John Wayne's *The Sands of Iwo Jima* "arguably the most popular World War II film of all time." Viewed superficially, the film is a patriotic celebration of the Marine Corps in one of the war's great battles; but Huebner presents an alternative interpretation. He notes the intense conflict and ill feelings between Wayne's character, Sergeant Stryker, and the men he commands. "The marines under Stryker's command fight amongst themselves and with Stryker almost as much as they fight against the Japanese." Although it is common to depict conflict in the ranks in military and war films, Huebner has a point to make about the disharmony depicted in the picture. Wayne's character broke a fellow Marine's jaw with a rifle during bayonet training and drew a bead on another to keep him from exposing their position at Tarawa. It is easy to miss this angle, Huebner suggests, because "by the end of the film it had all but evaporated in a haze of victory, patriotism, and sacrifice atop Mount Suribachi."

The warrior image continued to evolve in the 1950's, aided in part by the U.S. experience in Korea. Huebner credits glossy magazines—*Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*—with having played a dominant role in shaping public perception of the Korean War. Unlike in World War II, the military did not censor the press during the early months of the conflict, and news accounts were often critical of military leadership and skeptical of the progress it claimed to be making. Additionally, editors ran stories—sometimes accompanied by pictures of tired and tearful soldiers—on the fatigue and lack of preparedness of U.S. troops in Korea.

The Korean conflict provided new material for war movies that, reflecting the unsatisfying conclusion of the war, were often bleak. *Men in War* is a grim—almost *noir*—Korean War film from 1957, and Huebner discusses it at some length. Anthony Mann's film depicts a small band of soldiers cut off from allied forces and plagued with fear, and includes one character who is in a near-catatonic state from battle fatigue. "The UN forces in *Men in War* live by a chaotic, confused code of discipline—more than a decade before that disturbing image ignited widespread public concern during the Vietnam War." The Army denied assistance for the film because it depicted insubordination and a lack of discipline among the soldiers.

During the Vietnam War the government and the military endured a crisis of legitimacy as protesters took to the streets to denounce the war, while TV networks showed uncensored footage on the evening news. Among the disturbing images that crept into American living rooms was that of American soldiers burning a thatched-hut village during a search-and-destroy mission in 1965. Morley Safer of CBS News recorded the event and opined that, "to a Vietnamese peasant whose home means a lifetime of backbreaking labor, it will take more than presidential promises to convince him that we are on his side." President Johnson pungently asked CBS president Frank Stanton, "Are you trying to f--k me?"

An infamous episode occurred in March 1968 but was not revealed until a year later: the massacre at My Lai led by Lt. William Calley, Jr. Public reaction to the event revealed a high level of sympathy for U.S. troops, even after the war had become unpopular.

Lieutenant Calley, writes Huebner, was an "ineffectual leader and a menace to the Vietnamese." Calley and his troops killed hundreds of noncombatants in a massacre described by a participant as "just like a Nazi-type thing." A scandal erupted on the home front after Seymour Hersh broke the story, but Calley and his men were perceived by the public mainly as victims of military brainwashing and harsh wartime conditions. Indeed, Calley and his men were lionized as folk heroes. A song called "The Battle Hymn of Lt. Calley" sold hundreds of thousands of copies in 1971.

Huebner closes his narrative with the releases of *The Deer Hunter* and *Coming Home*. These two films, which competed for Oscars in 1978, help to round out the evolution of the warrior image. Huebner notes that, "though they are portrayed sympathetically, the vets in *The Deer Hunter* [and] *Coming Home* . . . seem damaged by their experiences."

Indeed, the films focus on the physical and emotional damage combat has on soldiers. *Coming Home* particularly depicts the pain and humiliating loss of control involved with becoming a paraplegic. Huebner notes that the movie

> continued to rewrite the rules of masculinity. . . . Movie audiences gradually saw men in uniform crying, comforting other men, refusing to fight, and speaking more freely about their feelings. . . . *Coming Home* far surpassed anything that had come before it in recasting the masculine hero.

The evolution of the warrior image that Huebner depicts tracks roughly with changes in the conception of American manhood in the same period. As early as the 1940's and 50's, popular culture occasionally depicted soldiers as cynical toward the military brass and their war aims, but it only haltingly portrayed soldiers as victims.

Over the years that hesitation evaporated, until *Coming Home* could depict Luke Martin throwing a tantrum over the difficulties he faced as a paraplegic in a veteran's hospital. But this phenomenon did not occur on the screen only. Huebner cites historian Peter Novick's lament that, in American society, "stoicism is replaced as a prime value by sensitivity" and suggests that the rise of "sensitive soldiers in American culture may have helped

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inspire a widening range of acceptable male . . . behavior." Perhaps that is not an entirely negative development. Yet, once the range of "acceptable male behavior" started to widen, it quickly developed into a chasm.

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

A Life in Literature

by Catharine Savage Brosman

Ambition and Survival: Becoming a Poet
by Christian Wiman
Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press; 249 pp., $18.00

In May 2003, Christian Wiman was named the new editor of *Poetry*, the Chicago-based magazine that Harriet Monroe founded and made justly famous. This appointment came a year after Ruth Lilly made a massive gift to the magazine that brought its endowment to nearly $200 million and attracted enormous media attention. Wiman, born in 1966, was considered by many a surprising choice, being somewhat young and unseasoned; he had in print at the time only one collection of verse, *The Long Home* (1998; reprinted in 2007). (A second, *Hard Night*, appeared in 2005.) Among other merits of the book under review is that it demonstrates his abilities as a judge and critic of poetry—thus vindicating the appointment. That Wiman is, at his best, also a very good stylist is equally clear.

This volume is conceptually flawed, however; as a collection of disparate magazine pieces, published in *Poetry*, the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, the *Sewanee Review*, the *American Scholar*, and elsewhere, it is somewhat uneven—and, worse, bicephalic, one head being autobiographical, the other critical. These two elements are not without vital connection, of course; the author acknowledges and tries to link them. The title (echoed in the text from time to time) suggests the connection, since the phrase "ambition and survival," which can be applied to the career of most persevering poets, implies aesthetic values and standards (whether or not they are met); those illustrated in the critical prose published here are, in other words, an outgrowth and aspect of the poet's literary aspirations. Wiman's has been a life in literature, including its critical dimensions, though literature is not his whole life—he denounces literary idolatry. The essay "Milton in Guatemala" explicitly ties together his life and his reading. Still, the two genres, autobiographical writing and literary criticism, are not necessarily tangent, and the presence of both makes this volume something of a miscellany, especially since the critical pieces are often very short notes that do not attain the searching reflection illustrated in Wiman's best autobiographical writing.

It is fitting to make clear what a good book this is in all other respects. Whether the author writes explicitly about himself or speaks as a critic, taking on major figures such as Thomas Hardy and Hart Crane as well as lesser ones, Wiman's style—sensitive, versatile, and, most of all, authentically his—is everywhere at the service of his acute intelligence. Adam Kirsch, writing in the *New York Sun*, called Wiman "one of the best critics at work today."

Not surprisingly, the explicitly personal chapters are the more engaging, although some, especially "Filthy Lucre," are somewhat fragmented. The autobiographical pieces that precede the final one deal principally with a few topics (out of chronological order): rootlessness; the stay in Guatemala; the mores of the remote West Texas town where the Wimans lived; his unusual and dysfunctional family, especially his father, who became a psychiatrist and dealt with the criminally insane at the state hospital; the poet's journey to Africa with his father and their encounters with some odd, anxiety-ridden Southern Baptist missionaries; and his personal reflections on religion (obliquely connected to poetry). Interspersed elsewhere are additional elements of a self-portrait. As one who, like Wiman, grew up in a small Texas town (mine was west of the Pecos), I appreciated his evocations in "The Limit" of his boyhood home and understood his desire to go to a distant university (Washington and Lee, in his case). The Guatemala essay is another engaging piece. While the considerations on Milton may not appeal to all readers because Milton does not, one is easily drawn by the portraits and the description of Wiman's bizarre living conditions. His residence was a rooftop shack of tin and cardboard, so miserable it would make the garrets of *la vie de Bohème* in France seem luxurious. This mode of living suited, I suppose, the assumption he had made—as a young, talented man aspiring to a life of poetry with what he calls a "hypertrophied will"—that one must seek out new experiences and live precariously, if not in utter poverty. He acknowledges that in fact what he succeeded in doing then was to miss both life and poetry.

The final essay, quite brief, dated 2006, recounts three momentous points in his life, all belonging to a short period after he had ceased writing early in the new millennium. In Chicago, he fell in love with a woman and married her; he regained his belief in God, rather gradually, not by a lightning bolt; and a malady that had bothered him for years was diagnosed as an incurable cancer of the blood (Waldenström's macroglobulinemia, according to one source). The writing in this short piece is discerning, wise, and sometimes beautiful, as, with what he calls his "sacred attentiveness," he evokes his Chicago surroundings after he and his wife leave a church service:

> . . . an iron sky and the lake so calm it seemed thickened; the El blasting past with its rain of sparks and brief, lost faces; the broad leaves and white blooms of a catalpa on our street, Grace Street, and under the tree a seethe of something that was just barely still a bird, quick

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with life beyond its own.

This was after learning the diagnosis; but the return to belief and church had been prepared well before, by reflection, reading, and a tacit attraction, shared with his wife. The reading included Simone Weil, from whom Wiman quotes frequently, whose emphasis on communication through, and because of, separation from the divine appealed to him. He concludes with a statement of hope, Saint Paul's "hope toward God."

The critical chapters illustrate Wiman's wide reading, some in connection with his role at *Poetry*. He is concerned, rightly, with the general state of poetry in America, and he can be blunt about it (as well as witty), speaking disparagingly of the "la-la land of workshops and blurbs" and "institutionalized efforts at actually encouraging the overconsumption of poetry," which "always seem a bit freakish, ill-conceived." Such organized undertakings cannot replace the community that made a highly literary poetry possible, almost popular, as late as the first decades of the 20th century. Already, that literary culture was waning and by now is, as nearly all observers agree, almost unimaginable.

The critical material includes numerous reprinted reviews (some called "Fugitive Pieces") and chapters dealing with general issues, such as free verse *versus* formal ("An Idea of Order"), poetry in a visual culture, and the prose of those known chiefly as poets and the connections between the two modes, about which Wiman asserts (perhaps with his own writing in mind),

> It's fair to expect that some of the aesthetic elements that lead to distinction in poetry—metaphorical intelligence, a sense of linguistic rhythm . . . —will make themselves felt in the prose.

Wiman ranges easily over many aspects of 20th-century literature in English and offers countless perspicacious observations and sound judgments. Major authors whom he obviously favors, among them T.S. Eliot, are cited repeatedly, so that the reader comes to see their work as touchstones. Wiman does not hide his admiration (in certain cases qualified) likewise for Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, Richard Wilbur, the early Robert Lowell, Derek Walcott, and Seamus Heaney, and, in fiction, Cormac McCarthy, though he considers *Blood Meridian* to illustrate an art of "exhausted moral resources." From these assessments and others, much can be concluded about Wiman's aesthetics. There is no attempt, however, at surveying modern poetry as a whole nor at defending methodically a set of criteria by which to assess it; in any case, Wiman is not a proscriptive critic.

Of course no reader is likely to agree with every evaluation here. Open for discussion is Wiman's tendency to judge a poet by the number of "great poems" he has produced. Thinking in terms of "great works" can lead to undervaluing writing that imparts more in the aggregate than individually, or that is essentially an art of the small. (Emily Dickinson's is an example of both, though Wiman does not underrate her.)

Wiman knows well enough how blind we can be to poetic achievement, how decades may be required for due recognition of work (for that work to create its audience). He recalls how in 1915, acting on Ezra Pound's advice, Harriet Monroe took a chance on "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and thereby made literary history; whereas the reaction then was generally negative, other poets represented in that issue and presumably admired at the time are now in oblivion.

Much of what Wiman likes in poetry is not the breezy, folksy (if accessible) stuff of many current writers but, rather, artful work on an elevated linguistic level, even somewhat formal (though he does not idolize the New Formalists). It is at least in part on this splendid tradition of high language that the future of poetry in America depends. You can't have the poetry without the language.

Catharine Savage Brosman is poetry editor for Chronicles.

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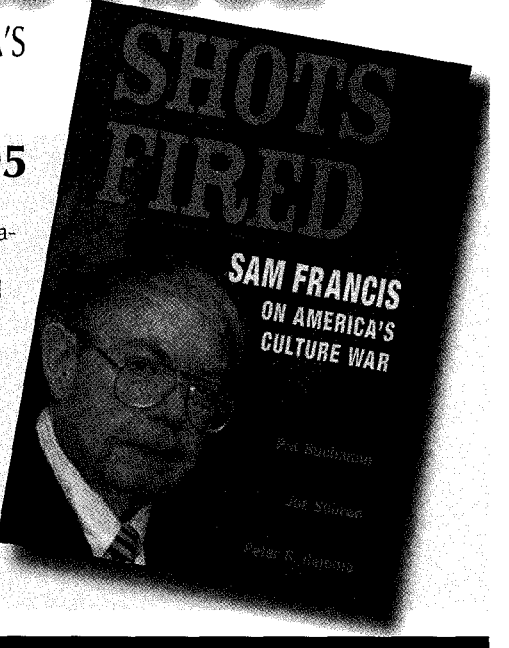

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by Aaron D. Wolf

Walking Distance

This is an age in which news of a tragedy garners a response such as this: "Well, our thoughts are with you." Happy thoughts full of Pelagian grace. It is therefore with some reservation that I now examine Rocky Twyman's direct and public prayer to the Almighty, a supplication he no doubt offers with full confidence that the Good Lord hath the power to accomplish all that he asketh and more.

"God, deliver us from these high gas prices."

So what's wrong with that? You some kinda tree-huggin' liberal? You think high gas prices'll save us from global warming? Or don't you believe in prayer?

Mr. Twyman is a p.r. consultant and a Seventh-Day Adventist from Rockville, Maryland. A long-time community activist, he has worked hard to register minorities as bone-marrow donors. That did not garner him national media attention, however. But his Pray at the Pump "movement," as it has been termed by the *San Francisco Gate*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *St. Louis Post-Gazette*, has.

"O God, here we are again at Thy mercy. Oh, our hearts are full; but our pockets are empty, Lord. Bring down these gas prices for us, Lord."

That's the scene FOX News paints for us, Mr. Twyman and friends holding hands at a Chevron station, after which a stout blonde anchor not even barely contains her chortles. Simpering, she turns to Mr. Twyman: "A Washington congregation actually *prays* for lower gas prices."

It's almost enough to make you want to side with Rocky—that same heartburn that fires up NASCAR America for John McCain whenever Barack Obama browbeats us for being white. Nearly all of the media attention paid Mr. Twyman resonates with snickering. *Hey*, you want to counter, *at least this guy believes in prayer*.

"Why pray for cheaper gas?" she wants to know.

"Well, because so many people are being impacted—particularly in the churches, people that want to volunteer and do outreach things are not able to do it."

Yes, high gas prices are affecting all of our lives, and if James Howard Kunstler, T. Boone Pickens, and a host of others are right when they say that we've reached Peak Oil (when daily world demand exceeds daily barrel output), the fun has only just begun. Today, some folks in Mr. Twyman's congregation are hard-pressed to drive in to church during the week to serve at the soup kitchen. Tomorrow, they may be walking to church on Sunday.

American life revolves around the automobile. Carbon-copied suburbs encircle our eviscerated cities, gutted by an Interstate Highway System that expedited white flight. Always-large Wal-Marts with enormous parking lots flank the suburbs and are filled with goods motored over from China and warehoused on 18 wheelers. And sprawling strip malls and megamalls surrounded by fast-food chains with drive-thru windows outflank *them*. No one would dream of walking to the supermarket; it's too far away, and besides, you'd have to run an eight-lane highway and hurdle a berm to get there.

Back when folks could and did walk to the grocery store, the hardware store, the greasy spoon, they were most often in the company of other folks who could and did walk to those places. Of course, they also knew the proprietors of those establishments—their neighbors—warts and all. They had to exercise a bit more patience in the check-out line, at the repair counter, with the attendant. A young punk might be more inclined to watch his mouth. A friend of his dad's might be around the corner in the next aisle. He might run into you at church.

In Rockford, the most talked-about church is the one that bought the dying Colonial Village Mall from the Southeast Asians. On Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, the parking lot is filled with cars, and the sign reads "A Different Way to Do Church." Inside the former J.C. Penney's is now a stage, theater lighting, and large video projectors. This megachurch, like most of the others, is built on the principle of anonymity. The lights dim over the audience to focus their attention. Nobody walks there.

Then again, nobody walks to Holy Family, St. Paul, or First Baptist, either. Old St. Paul is across from the projects, so nobody lives by it. And Holy Family and First Baptist are in the suburbs, so nobody lives by them either, no matter what the parish lines say. And with that distance comes a certain degree of anonymity. Sure, we know people at church. *How're you doing, Bob. Good to see you. Have a good week. All right.* For this reason—because of the fact that *parishioner* and *neighbor* have become antonyms—churches have myriad social activities, all in an attempt to replace irreplaceable community.

Russell Kirk called the automobile a "mechanical Jacobin." It certainly did rev up a cultural revolution. The Jacobins made it easy for neighbors to rat out neighbors. Our mechanical one makes it easier to be a jackass at the church voters' assembly. (*See you later, Bob.*) It also greases the skids of the individualist, "seeker-sensitive," Pelagian theology that has parked itself in the carports of so many of our churches.

Rocky Twyman has the right inclination; his petition just needs a tune-up. *Lord, deliver us from the high price of gas.*

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by Scott P. Richert

Lighting Candles

I cannot remember when I first met Mary Ann Aiello. I know, of course, that it had to have been sometime after I moved to Rockford in the last week of 1995, and I suspect that it may have been another three or four years later. But there was something about Mary Ann that made you feel instantly as if she had always been a part of your world. Slightly over five feet, a bundle of nervous energy, she spoke openly, honestly, earnestly with everyone she met. Normally, those who have the gift of gab tend to spend the moments when someone else is talking thinking of their next line. Mary Ann was never that way. She listened as intently as she spoke.

Even in the midst of debate, Mary Ann treated her most bitter political opponents with the same respect and dignity and kindness that she showed her friends. In almost 21 years as a member of the Winnebago County Board, she fought battle after battle on behalf of her constituents—and even occasionally against their expressed will. She may never have read Edmund Burke's Speech to the Electors of Bristol, but when she was certain that a policy was right or wrong, she thought that the best way to represent those who had elected her was to fight for what is right, without regard to the consequences for her own political career.

I had the privilege of working side by side with Mary Ann as she fought against a number of bad ideas, including an inequitable Superfund settlement that would have saddled small businesses which never polluted with the same taxes paid by those who had (an event that was the initial impetus for this very column) and a state proposal to build a massive prison in the midst of farmland in southeast Winnebago County. She developed a reputation for always being against proposals—which were always presented by those who proposed them as "progress." In most cases, her progressive opponents were Republicans—an irony that was not lost on Mary Ann, who had switched from the Democratic to the Republican Party after a few terms on the county board.

Readers may remember Mary Ann from another battle chronicled in these pages. In 2002, voters approved a referendum to raise funding for a new county jail in downtown Rockford across the street from St. Mary's Oratory. A year later, under the cover of Labor Day weekend, members of the Winnebago County Board attempted to set in motion a plan to raze St. Mary's Oratory and add the property to the jail site. The board member in charge of bringing the proposal to a vote on the Tuesday after Labor Day made the mistake of using e-mail to detail the plan, and Mary Ann ended up with a copy.

Looking back, those of us who attend St. Mary's and fought to save it should never have doubted the final outcome. For Mary Ann, a devout Catholic, this was not just a fight against a bad proposal; it was a battle to preserve the second-oldest Catholic church in Rockford. Having supported the jail referendum, Mary Ann felt personally responsible for the threat to St. Mary's, and she was determined to make sure that it remained standing.

Mary Ann successfully shepherded a resolution through the county board that removed the threat—at least temporarily. Faced with the possibility that the same cabal of board members would be more successful in the future, Mary Ann and local architect Gary Anderson filed for historic preservation status for St. Mary's.

Not surprisingly, the Diocese of Rockford objected to the filing, because it would not simply protect the church from seizure but place restrictions on the diocese's use of the church as well. Bishop Thomas Doran announced his intention to close the church if historic preservation status were granted. Over the objections of the diocese, the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission voted in early December to approve the petition, which passed to the Rockford City Council for approval.

Mary Ann and I thus ended up on opposite sides of the issue, but with the same desire to protect this landmark church. After weeks of discussion and a meeting I mediated between diocesan officials and Mary Ann and Gary, Mary Ann called me around 8 P.M. on Christmas Eve 2003. She wanted me to be able to go to Midnight Mass at St. Mary's knowing that she and Gary had agreed that evening to withdraw their petition.

I lit a candle for Mary Ann at St. Mary's in the early hours of Christmas morning and thought about how often I had seen her do the same, both there and across the Rock River at her home parish of St. James. I never once saw her enter a church without pausing to light a candle. But then, in the rest of her life, she was never one to curse the darkness, either.

In the end, some of those who claimed to support St. Mary's thought that Mary Ann had betrayed them by dropping the petition, but they were wrong. Mary Ann's devotion to the Faith helped her put her trust in Bishop Doran, and five years later, the church she loved still stands. Bishop Doran returned that trust when, on July 1, 2008, he presided over her funeral Mass at St. James. She had died five days earlier, after a brief battle with cancer, at age 59. May God grant her eternal rest, and eternal memory.

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Letter From Ukraine

by Matthew A. Rarey

Dispelling the Darkness of Secularism

Bolshevism evolved into religion, some kind of materialistic pagan religion, which worships Lenin and his like as demigods, while considering lies, deceit, violence, the oppression of the poor, the demoralizing of children, humiliation of women, destruction of the family . . . and the reduction of all the nation to extreme poverty as the principles of its rule—although all these principles are false.
—Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, leader of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics (Lviv, 1936)

After being tossed about by the Charybdis of communism, the nations of Eastern Europe are sailing toward the Scylla of secularism. And this monster, according to Pope Benedict XVI, is even more destructive.

Communism, like any ideology, is fanatically embraced only by a slim, myopic minority; secularism—in its materialistic, hedonistic manifestation—appeals to man's carnal nature, thus threatening to turn the majority from a divinely oriented life. While communism inspired the destruction of churches, many ordinary people continued to pray and worship discreetly, their faith strengthened through persecution. With communism nearly two decades in the grave, secularism tempts ordinary people to worship Mammon and Me during the week, sleep in on Sunday, and maybe honor God by taping a holy card to the dashboard. It is a slippery slope from Pravda to Prada, but the same man-centered, God-negating principle applies to both. Ukraine is a case in point.

"It's tragic that the Berlin Wall fell at precisely the time when the West no longer had the same moral integrity it had, say, even thirty years before," Fr. Peter Galadza said over coffee and pastries in the rector's office of the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU).

"So when the Wall came down, the worst of the West came pouring in: all the cultural detritus pumped out of New York and L.A. that foreigners associate with America. And many people here, especially the young, assuming that the West was superior, lapped up the very worst elements of secularized Western culture—loud commercialism, vulgar music, hypersexualization—all the garbage that we conservatives had been decrying since the 60's. It's a pity."

Father Galadza, a Pennsylvanian of Ukrainian descent, is director of UCU's Institute of Liturgical Studies. (Located in the city of Lviv, near the Polish border, UCU is the sole Catholic university in the former Soviet Union.) A man of jolly girth and the father of five—married men being allowed ordination in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which runs UCU—he surveyed Ukraine's post-communist landscape on a sunny afternoon in mid-March.

The focus of our discussion was western Ukraine and how the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church—the majority of whose 5.5 million members reside in the west—is confronting the secular scourge, particularly as it impacts marriage.

The east, for centuries under czarist rule and predominantly Orthodox, was annexed to the Soviet Union shortly after the Red Revolution. The communists' initial policy toward Christianity was to destroy every outward manifestation of the Faith and brainwash the young into atheism. And it suffered demographically from the culture of abortion introduced in the mid-1920's (the Soviet Union was the first to legalize the practice) and Stalin's orchestrated famine of the early 30's, in which approximately seven million Ukrainians died, to be replaced largely by imported Russians. Today, eastern Ukraine bears the worst scars of the communist "principles." Besides a stratospheric abortion rate and consequent demographic collapse, this part of Ukraine is where human traffickers prey heavily upon impoverished young women, luring them to the West with promises of legitimate jobs, only to force them into prostitution, servicing johns from London to Los Angeles.

The western part, however, had been (and remains) predominantly Greek Catholic and Western-oriented. Alternately under the rule of Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, western Ukraine escaped the birth pangs of the Soviet Union, falling under communist rule nearly 30 years after Red October with the advance of the Red Army in 1944. The communists subverted its Christian culture less violently than in the east, with one exception: In 1946 Stalin banned the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the largest Eastern Rite of the Catholic Church, both for serving as a link to the West—she has been in communion with Rome since the 16th century—and as a focal point of Ukrainian patriotic identity. Her bishops were executed or sent to Siberia, where all but one, Joseph Cardinal Slipyj, died in captivity. And she functioned underground as the "Church of the Catacombs" until being relegalized in 1989.

Being banned had a positive long-term consequence, however: It spared the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from the temptation to compromise her societal role in order to stay on the good side of the Evil Empire. This allowed her to maintain her integrity, an indispensable buttress to her apostolic activities in present-day Ukraine. The officially sanctioned Orthodox Church was not spared this temptation. In order to stay above ground, she had to confine her activities to the four walls of the church building on

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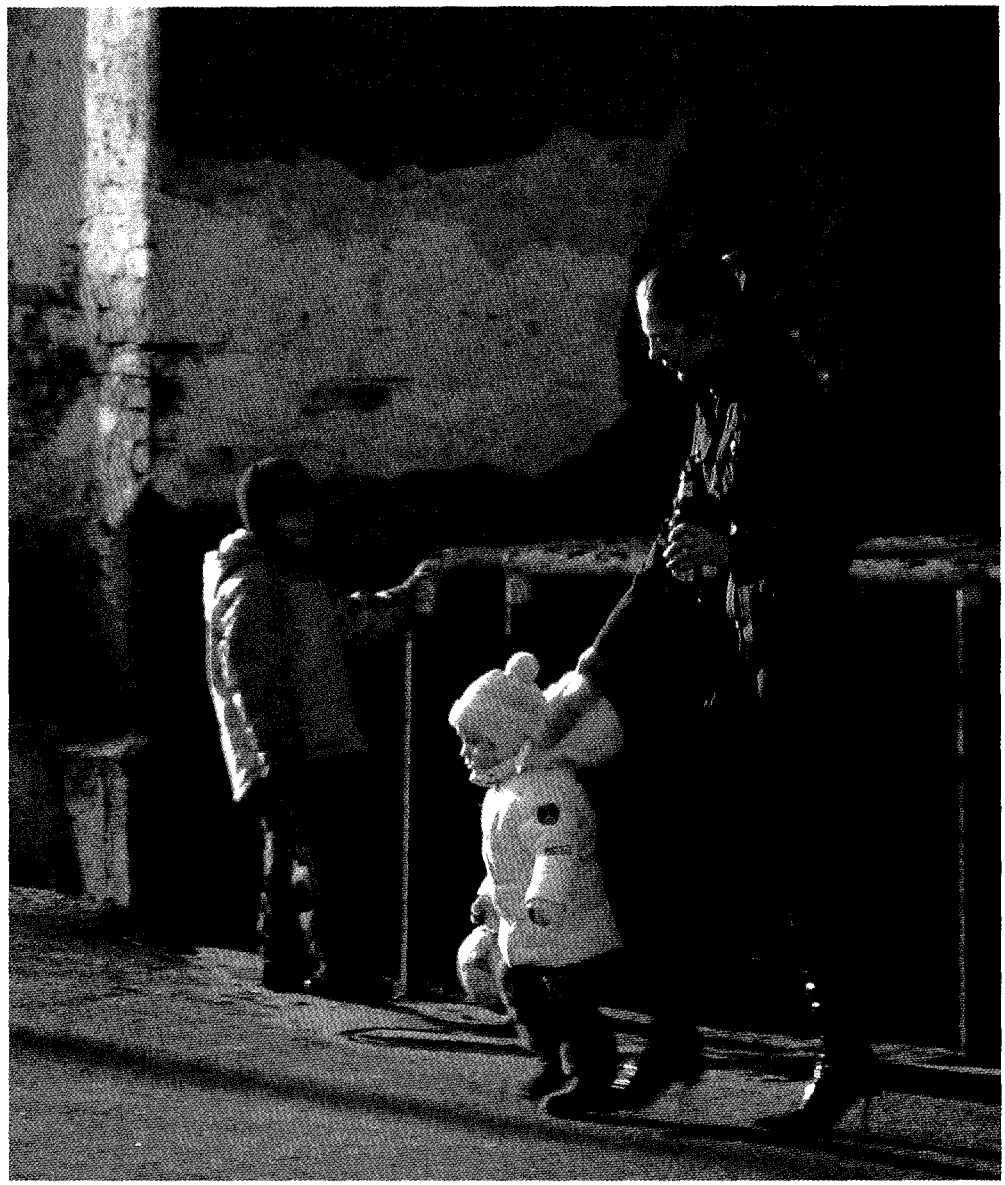
Sundays and holy days. Thus, the Orthodox churches of the former Soviet Union are less effectively engaged in the reevangelization of society than their Catholic brethren. (Evangelicals, meanwhile, feature American-style preachers on television.)

All Ukraine, however, presents the same basic cultural milieu in which a postcommunist society confronts the seductive godlessness of secularism. The communist system doggedly uprooted Christianity (if it did not always destroy the actual churches); attacked the moral basis of the culture; and propagated a purely functional notion of sexuality that encouraged abortion and birth control, which, together with easy divorce, undermined marriage. The perversion of sexuality, considered in the context of the Soviet ethos of hypermasculinity, has made young women the saddest victims—unsure of their sexuality and lacking a sense of self-worth to boot.

Walk down any main street in Kyiv (the capital and the largest city in eastern Ukraine) or Lviv (the largest city in the west), and you will see many young women sporting fashions that are not only decades out of style but whorish: the miniest of miniskirts, black-leather go-go boots with stiletto heals, tight jeans, fishnet stockings. More often than not, they also are skinny bordering on emaciated. According to Father Galadza, these appearances are the result of a combination of factors.

"First, they think, 'Hey, look, now that we're a free country, isn't this what freedom is all about?' So they copy the worst models of Western femininity, which aren't models for femininity at all. They're a perversion of femininity." Furthermore, Father Galadza continued, "Many of their own mothers encourage this dress and this attitude. 'Dress to be alluring and don't eat too much or you won't be attractive enough to find a man.'"

The distorted attitude of young women toward their sexuality is especially tragic in a society with high unemployment, as it encourages a quotidian form of prostitution: the prevalence of "kept" women, whether attached to a wealthier man for a short while or taken as a long-term mistress. "They may not think they're prostitutes," Father Galadza concluded, "but they are."



Matthew Rarey

Indeed, the form of secularism rampant in Ukraine is not "the aggressive, anti-Church ideology associated with left-wing European parties responsible for denying the Christian foundation of European culture," says Prof. Myroslav Marynovych, director of UCU's Institute of Religion and Society. "This kind of secularism was publicly blamed in the Ukrainian press for not allowing [the openly Catholic] Rocco Buttiglione to become EU justice commissioner."

The culprit is that nonideological form of "soft" secularism—hedonistic and materialistic—that preoccupies one with the here and now to the detriment of realizing a transcendent purpose to life. This threatens the most elemental institutions in a society already morally undermined by communism: marriage and, by extension, the family. Helping people realize the sacramental nature of marriage and the divine duty of rearing children—in contrast to the secular notion of a "partnership," predicated on feelings, almost commercial in nature, and easily dissolvable—is a vital ministry in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's reevangelization of society.

According to the Church's Commission on the Family, 59 parish centers in Ukraine offer standardized programs to prepare couples for marriage. These take 45 hours to complete. The

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Matthew Rarey

Fr. Peter Galadza, director of the Ukranian Catholic University's Institute of Liturgical Studies.

information office of the archeparchy (archdiocese) of Lviv describes them as "well-developed programs that often serve not only the parish where they are housed, but also neighboring parishes." (If no center is conveniently located, the duty falls to the parish priest. The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches requires all "pastors of souls . . . to see to it that the Christian faithful are prepared for the matrimonial state.") The pre-marriage program is mandatory, but not the loosely organized "Movement of Young Marriages," a popular follow-up program featuring classes and talks aimed at guiding newlyweds through their first five years of marriage.

"Though my wife and I already were acquainted with the Christian understanding of marriage as a Sacrament, we encountered topics that simply aren't taught at school," said Hryhoriy Seleschuk, a researcher at UCU's Institute of Religion and Society in his late 20's. "Bioethics and natural family planning, for example, are topics virtually unheard of in Ukraine. The more secular couples attending the classes seemed especially interested."

In place for almost ten years, the official pre-marriage program is having a tangible impact. Last year, the regional authorities of the oblast of Lviv (Ukraine is divided into oblasts, analogous to states) publicly attributed to the program Lviv's precipitously declining divorce rate over the past five years—from 53 to 30 percent. (This trend holds true for much of western, heavily Catholic Ukraine, whereas eastern oblasts, according to 2006 figures, have posted significantly higher divorce rates. The divorce-to-marriage ratio in Dnipropetrovska and Donetska is over 3:4.) Mr. Seleschuk noted that the local government in Lviv has responded to the Church's pre-marriage initiatives by "creating its own network of marriage counseling programs attached to the civil marriage registration centers."

Also noteworthy is UCU's Institute of Marriage and the Family, which disseminates Catholic literature throughout Ukraine. Founded in 1998, its first task was to publish Catholic documents in the native language, from papal encyclicals to Pope John Paul II's writings on the theology of the body. Today the 14 professors affiliated with the institute teach courses at UCU on such topics as "Familial Ethics from the Christian Point of View" (a 180-hour-long course addressing philosophical, medical, psychological, and theological issues); "Human Sexuality: Myth and Reality"; and a primer on natural family planning. Classes are open to the public as well, and they are serving as a template for diocesan programs. Additionally, UCU students affiliated with the institute teach courses on human sexuality from the Christian perspective at Lviv-area high schools. The authorities do not mind, and there is no Ukrainian counterpart to the ACLU to raise a ruckus.

"I truly believe we're serving a vital social role," says Prof. Yuriy Pidlisny, founder and director of the institute. "Our priority now is to spread our courses beyond Lviv with distance-learning programs, meanwhile developing our classes into a comprehensive master's degree program in the Church's teachings on marriage and family. There is just so much work we Christians must do in post-Soviet Ukraine. But we must begin somewhere."

Matthew A. Rarey is communications director of the Chicago-based Ukrainian Catholic Education Foundation, which informs Americans about the academic and financial needs of the Ukrainian Catholic University.

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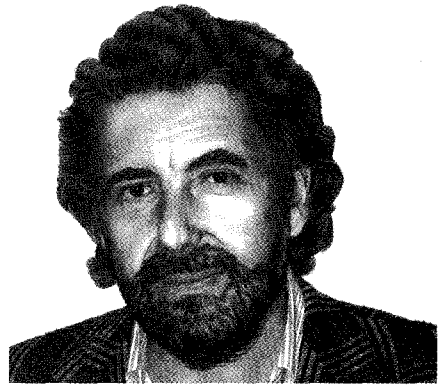
by Andrei Navrozov

Return to McSorrento



In the 1970's, when I lived in America, McDonald's, apart from being a fast-food chain, was a powerful symbol of everything that was wrong with that country. Neither I nor anybody I knew ever referred to the leviathan as a source of nourishment; invariably, its name was placed in a quarantine of ironic quotation marks, in the manner of Soviet dissidents speaking of Stalin's constitution; and, if anyone did eat there, he kept it to himself, evasive as a respectable citizen who frequents a lugubrious part of town.

Either with voluble and thoroughgoing political theorizing, like myself, or else tacitly, like many in my circle of acquaintance, everybody seemed to agree that McDonald's was a significant step in the preparation of a global concentration-camp mentality, a state of mind enfeebled by Pavlovian conditioning whereby man accepts any kind of indignity in exchange for any kind of alimentation. It picked up where the authoritarian regimen of the school left off, in the dining hall, with its Dickensian rations of mystery meats and hydrocephalic potatoes. Obviously, in those days, none of my friends had served in the Army or been to prison, and the American private school was a common point of reference.

The McDonald's polity was a convincing caricature of untrammeled democracy as the leveling tyranny so richly adumbrated by John Stuart Mill, as well as to some extent by several of America's Founding Fathers. At the level of the most uncomplicated senses, it illustrated the parallels between the two varieties of capitalism, the Western-model, global-corporate kind and the Nazi-Soviet, totalitarian-state kind.

Finally, the polity backed up rather neatly into the residual tradition of Puritan intolerance verging on meanness verging on cruelty. Suffice it to remind the reader that Dr. Kellogg, he of the cornflake way, became the nation's authority on nutrition thanks to the runaway success of a book entitled *Plain Facts About Sexual Life*, largely a manual on the prevention of self-abuse and, more generally, on the suppression of what the doctor termed "the unnatural excitement of the animal propensities."

In the 1980's, after I had more or less emigrated to Britain, my hostility to McDonald's only intensified. To the reasons already enumerated was added colonial resentment: "Why should there be a McDonald's in Leicester Square, and isn't everything that's repulsive about this dump the fault of there being a McDonald's right over there?" It was as though a fiery exhalation of the globalized Godzilla had torn the guts out of a peaceful and picturesque Japanese village; cut to mother screaming. Everything that followed the 1980's, in fact, seemed to have about it the historical inevitability inherent to the horror genre, from the Kelloggization or "dumbing down" of English newspapers to the passing of British publishing to transnational conglomerates, from the effective disbanding of the House of Lords to the new English cooking. McGodzilla, Scourge of the First World.

In the 1990's I was spending most of my time in Italy. Periodic sojourns in London threw up a curious novelty—namely, that the more sophisticated and glamorous the whole metropolitan scene appeared, the more characterless, insipid, and foolish was the food people ate. In 1985, for instance, there was hardly a place in London that made an Italian espresso. In 1995, there were hundreds of such places, each proffering a large cup of dirty dishwater—usually to accompany a sandwich described on the menu as "a panini"—at the cost of a three-course meal anywhere in provincial Italy. By 2005, some of the fanciest restaurants in town had only the prices to distinguish themselves from McDonald's; every Londoner was now obliged to dine at whatever branch of it he could afford.

At the lowest end of the scale, moreover, as my novel experience of abject indigence soon revealed, the score was decidedly in favor of the original. The American institution, which I had imperceptibly begun to think of—along with Coca-Cola, Heinz beans and ketchup, and even Grape-Nuts—as The Real Thing, now seemed a haven of unpretentiousness in the sea of tomfoolery and grandiloquence, to say nothing of salmonella. For eating in a pub was no longer a reasonable or even safe alternative; this was no longer the ploughman's and the pint; rather, it was the spinach lasagna, the panna cotta, and the chardonnay that combined in wholly unexpected ways to arrest digestion for many a night of silent anguish. The background music, too, was slightly better at McDonald's, at least in the sense that it was ever so slightly quieter.

In these last 30 years, Europe has so progressed—I mean, with respect to such palpable realities as government, sovereignty, liberty, press, family, education, culture, and gastronomy—that the vital difference in the degree of collectivism that made me quit the United States in the first instance is now a matter of argument. If, when in London, I now take my morning coffee in the McDonald's on Edgware Road—at £1.19, exactly the same travesty as anywhere else at twice the price—then it is no longer inconceivable that one day I should find myself writing for the *National Enquirer*. Perhaps even *The New Criterion*. ◇

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Chronicle of an Announced Arrest

The media frenzy surrounding the arrest of the former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic on July 21 was based entirely on the doctrine of non-equivalence inaugurated in 1992: Serb crimes are bad and justly exaggerated; Muslim crimes are understandable. This doctrine was spectacularly reiterated a month before Karadzic's capture, when the Muslim wartime commander of Srebrenica, Nasir Oric, was found not guilty by The Hague Tribunal of any responsibility for the killing of thousands of Serb civilians by the forces under his command in the three years before the fall of the enclave in July 1995.

The imbalance is more than unfair. The talking heads gloating over Karadzic's capture have no need to suppress the thought that different U.S. policies could have prevented the horror of "Bosnia," because no such thought ever occurs to them.

Over the past two centuries Balkan lands have been bargaining chips for alliance construction. The Bosnian war of 1992-95 was the most destructive segment of the War of Yugoslav Dissolution that began when the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia seceded in the summer of 1991. With no ethnic majority and no "Bosnian" nation, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina had the most to fear from violent secession. And with a reunited Germany committed to the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, the Muslim leadership in Sarajevo knew both that the old Yugoslavia was dead and that historic opportunities beckoned.

Of the three constituent peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Muslims had the plurality of 43 percent. Most of them were prepared to accept a compromise—especially if full independence risked war—but they nervously followed their implacably Islamist leaders in the Party of Democratic Action, who demanded a leap in the dark.

The Croats were the least numerous (17 percent), but they were the most determined to get Bosnia out of Yugoslavia, and then to break away from Bosnia with the support of Croatia. In 1992 they forged a tactical alliance with the Muslims to get the independence vote but clearly saw their interests in an extended Croatia.

The Serbs of Bosnia overwhelmingly refused to be ejected from Yugoslavia. Radovan Karadzic and other leaders of the Serbian Democratic Party rejected the referendum on sovereignty in February 1992 as it was held in violation of the constitutional right of each of Bosnia's three peoples to veto any decision unacceptable to its vital interests. Karadzic warned repeatedly that there was never any prospect that Bosnia could be taken out of Yugoslavia, regardless of the Serbs' objections, without a war.

President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, however, played the Bosnian crisis primarily as a means of consolidating his power without committing himself to any clearly defined strategic objective, such as a "Greater Serbia." By contrast, President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia did not shed Marxist crocodile tears at the passing of the old Titoist certainties. Unlike Milosevic, he was a true nationalist. In April 1992 he brought Croatian troops into western Herzegovina just as Milosevic withdrew the Yugoslav National Army from Bosnia.

When the Bosnian Serbs took control of the Serb-majority areas and connecting corridors in 1992, they were well equipped. But the numerical advantage lay with the Muslims, who hoped to win in the end with international help. Karadzic never understood that this was, indeed, Bosnia and Herzegovina President Alija Izetbegovic's grand strategy, and that time was not on the side of the Serbs.

In addition, both Karadzic and the Serbs were severely damaged by the Western media's handling of their mistreatment of Muslim prisoners and by their expulsion of non-Serb civilians in the summer of 1992. Similar atrocities by Croats and Muslims against Serbs and against each other, while no less common, were less conspicuous and deemed unworthy of attention.

Of several peace plans offered or mediated by the Europeans, Karadzic was under particular pressure—especially from Belgrade—to accept the Vance-Owen plan (May 1993), which would have divided Bosnia into ten "cantons." After Karadzic signed off, it was rejected by the Republika Srpska national assembly. Only months later Muslims rejected the Owen-Stoltenberg plan (December 1993), which provided for a confederal model of three sovereign national entities. A vague yet "nonnegotiable" plan presented by the "Contact Group" in 1994 was refused by the Serbs. It was quietly discarded in early 1995, by which time the Clinton administration decided to intervene directly on the Muslim side.

The media call for intervention made the Bosnian war the subject of international debate to an extent unknown since Vietnam. Many Europeans were inclined to support a compromise peace, a federalized Bosnia, and a real arms embargo; whereas the United States disliked European peace plans, broke the arms embargo starting in late 1993, and overtly supported the Muslims.

In 1992-93 Karadzic made a fundamental miscalculation that rendered the war unwinnable for the Serbs. Ev-

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er obsessed with maps, square miles, and territorial percentages to the detriment of strategic planning, he sat on his advantages and hoped that in the fullness of time the world would recognize the Serbs' apparent victory. His oft-repeated saying—"We don't want to defeat them, we want to separate from them"—was absurd: The latter could not be secured without the former.

Karadzic failed to grasp the tectonic shift that took place in January 1994, when the United States sponsored a Croat-Muslim alliance and the Europeans realized that there would be no settlement unless they surrendered political leadership to Washington. This new stage was inaugurated in February 1994, when a mortar shell fell on the crowded Markale market in Sarajevo. The Serbs were duly blamed, and evidence that the shell could not have been fired from Serbian lines surfaced too late to affect the subsequent crisis.

From this point the war became a matter of Muslim attempts to exploit the U.N. "safe areas"—in Sarajevo, Gorazde, Tuzla, Bihac, and Srebrenica—which had never been demilitarized. Muslims were allowed to attack out of these areas, but Serbs were not allowed to pursue them back in. From spring 1994 on, the Muslims could no longer lose the war, which, in view of their weak starting position, was tantamount to winning it.

By early 1995 Karadzic was no longer a player in the big game. In Washington, Bosnia was seen as an opportunity to transform NATO from a purely defensive alliance into an "out-of-area" enforcement agency, thus paving the way for the Kosovo intervention four years later. Russia was a constant source of disappointment for Karadzic. Often puzzled by Moscow's supine posture, he kept hoping that it would "shake itself up." Yet Yeltsin's Russia was weak, eager to appease the West, and reluctant to exert herself in the Balkans. Russia was slow to grasp that Washington wanted a peace settlement based on the defeat of the Serbs. By 1995, informed Russian opinion reflected alarm at the direction events were taking, but it was too late, and too difficult, for Yeltsin to devise a new policy.

In the summer of 1995 London and Paris reluctantly agreed to allow NATO to bomb the Serbs, while the United States reluctantly accepted the sort of settlement the Europeans had wanted in 1992-93. But the bombing of the Bosnian Serb army in August 1995, which appeared to end the war, was less important militarily than the entry of the Croatian army into Bosnia, now trained and extensively re-equipped by the United States. Even this Croatian intervention was only possible because the Yugoslav army refused to intervene to save its clients west of the Drina. The war ended because Milosevic wanted it to end.

The war transformed NATO and renewed American leadership in Europe to an extent not seen since Kennedy. It established that America wanted to be indispensable in the process of European reorganization after 1989. Richard Holbrooke, the chief U.S. negotiator in 1995, boasted a year later: "We are re-engaged in the world, and Bosnia was the test." By "we," he meant the United States, not "the West" or the "international community." Indeed, no nation-state started and finished the Bosnian story as a political actor with an unchanged diplomatic personality. Each great power became a forum for the global debate for and against intervention, the debate for and against a certain kind of NATO, and an associated media-led international political process. The interventionists prevailed then, and their narrative dominates the public commentary on Karadzic's arrest now.

Far from bringing the Bosnian episode to a close, Karadzic's transfer to The Hague raises an old question that remains unanswered by the interventionists: If the old Yugoslavia merely collapsed under the weight of the supposedly insurmountable differences among its constituent nations, how can Bosnia—the Yugoslav microcosm *par excellence*—develop and sustain the dynamics of a viable polity? For an answer, we will have to wait for the outside powers to lose interest in upholding the constitutional edifice made in Dayton.

As for the specific charges against Karadzic, we need not hypothesize a pre-war "joint criminal enterprise" of ethnic cleansing and murder to explain the events of 1992-95. The crimes that followed were not the direct result of anyone's nationalist project. These crimes, as Susan Woodward notes, "were the results of the wars and their particular characteristics, not the causes."

By recognizing an independent Bosnia, the "international community" made loyalty to Yugoslavia look like a conspiratorial disloyalty to "Bosnia"—after all, if there is a "Bosnia," there must be a nation of "Bosnians." In 1943-44 Tito was able to force the Anglo-Americans to pretend that his struggle was not communist revolution. In 1992-95 Izetbegovic forced the West to pretend that his *jihad* was the defense of "multiethnicity." Then as now, great powers pay a fee for entering the Balkan casino: They must exchange the truth for someone's story.

Radovan Karadzic will be duly convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity, and he will not come out of jail alive. The verdict is already written. And yet the conclusion of this episode reflects a fundamental imbalance. It ignores the essence of the Bosnian war—the Serbs' striving not to be forced into secession—while remaining mute about the culpability of the other two sides for a series of unconstitutional, illegitimate, and illegal political decisions that caused the war.

The judgment against Karadzic at the U.S.-sponsored and largely U.S.-funded tribunal at The Hague will be built on this flawed foundation. It will be neither fair nor just, so it will be detrimental to what America should stand for in the world. It will also give further credence to the myth of Muslim victimhood, Serb viciousness, and Western indifference, and therefore weaken our resolve in the global struggle euphemistically known as the "War on Terror." ◁

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HISTORIOGRAPHY

Studies of Character

by Sean R. Busick

"Teach him he must deny himself," said Lee. That was the general's advice to a young mother who brought her infant to him after the War Between the States to receive his blessing. In his classic four-volume biography *R.E. Lee*, Douglas Southall Freeman chose this as the incident that best exemplifies Robert E. Lee's message for the young men and women of the South in the reunited nation. Lee himself—through four years of war, followed by surrender and subjugation—was the very model of Christian self-denial. Though written in the early 20th century, Freeman's biography of Lee contains a vital message for the young men and women of today. Lee, especially as presented by Freeman, provides an excellent model for young people to emulate. Freeman's Lee shows us how to live, how to face both triumph and adversity with courage, humility, and grace.

Freeman's biography of Lee, awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1935, was written at a time when skilled amateurs could still have their books appreciated by academic historians. Some of the finest histories and biographies of the first half of the 20th century were written by amateur historians. Freeman, like Claude Bowers and Frederick Lewis Allen, was a journalist who knew how to write for an educated public. When, in 1948, academic historians were asked to rank the greatest dead American historians, the list was dominated by such amateurs as Francis Parkman, George Bancroft, and Henry Adams. However, this was already starting to change as academic historians became enamored with the latest theories and came to value pedantry over elegant narrative.

Freeman was a consummate literary stylist who wrote history in the same tradition as Parkman, William H. Prescott, William Gilmore Simms, and, later, Shelby Foote. Unlike most of the Progressive historians who dominated academic history writing at the time, Freeman appreciated the importance of individuals in shaping history.

According to Freeman, Lee early developed the character and manners that would later distinguish him, learning self-control from his mother. By the eve of the War Between the States, he was pious, virtuous, self-controlled, and self-sacrificing, displaying devotion to God, family, and home. He had a natural talent for mathematics, was well grounded in the classical languages as well as Spanish and French, and was a careful student of American and military history.

"His manners reflected his spiritual life," writes Freeman. "His was a simple soul, humble, transparent, and believing." Lee devoted time each day to his prayer book and to reading his Bible and spent long hours on his knees. His faith was the foundation of his character, teaching him selflessness, equanimity, and submission to the divine will. As Freeman writes:

> He believed in a God who, in His wisdom, sent blessings beyond man's deserts, and visited him, on occasion, with hardships and disaster for the chastening of the rebellious heart of the ungrateful and the forgetful. In every disaster, he was to stand firm in the faith that it was sent by God for reasons that man could not see.

His religion also instilled in him a strong sense of duty. "There is," Lee wrote, "a true glory and a true honor: the glory of duty done—the honor of the integrity of principle." Thus equipped, Lee was better prepared than most to bear the trials of a war in which he would never meet the enemy on even terms.

When Lee was forced to surrender the remnants of his gallant but ragged army to the overwhelming number of troops General Grant was able to bring against him, he faced the situation with dignity and fortitude. For Lee, the question had become, "Is it right to surrender this army?" With great reluctance he decided it was right and that he had, to the best of his ability, discharged his duty. He explained to his men,

> Feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss that must have attended the continuance of the contest, I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen.

After the war, Lee assumed the presidency of Washington College. He believed the proper education of Southern youth "one of the most important objects now to be attained." As president he instituted the college's honor code: "We have but one rule here, and it is that every student must be a

Further Reading

Some other good biographies that give us insight into Southern history and the character of their subjects are Albert Jay Nock's biography of Thomas Jefferson, the biographies of John C. Calhoun by Margaret Coit and Charles Wiltse, Clyde Wilson's life of James Johnston Pettigrew, and for younger readers, The Boys' Life of Robert E. Lee *by Stanley F. Horn. Lee, Washington, Jefferson, Calhoun, and Pettigrew are worthy companions for any reader. (SB)*

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gentleman."

Lee's own model of a gentleman was the man for whom Washington College was named. Freeman also chronicled Washington's life in seven thick volumes that won a Pulitzer in 1958. Because Washington was successful in leading his country in her struggle for independence, this biography lacks the sense of tragedy that one sees in Lee's life. Nevertheless, it is easy to see Washington in Lee, and, like Lee, we can benefit from a study of Washington's character.

According to Freeman, early in his life Washington "acquired a positive love of the right and developed the will to do the right." Washington was reverent, self-controlled, and committed to God, family, and home. Like Lee, Washington was not simply the product of his environment. His character was the result of his own conscious decisions. He willed himself to become the man he wished to be. "What he was, he made himself by will, effort, discipline, ambition and perseverance," wrote Freeman.

These two biographies provide us with excellent models of gentlemen, men of humility, integrity, honor, and faith. They also give us a good picture of Southern history from the mid-18th century until Lee's death in 1870. And the story they tell is more compelling than what one finds in most modern histories of the Old South. Many of the histories published today are dull affairs, full of theory and jargon. They are written in the belief that all of our actions are determined by materialist factors over which we have little or no control, or that we are inevitably being swept along the path of Progress. Freeman, however, believed that individuals matter, that their character, their actions, and their ideas have consequences. He shows us how Washington and Lee, while recognizing the role of Providence in their lives, helped to shape their own destinies. They were gentlemen because they chose to be.

Sean R. Busick is an assistant professor of history at Athens State University and the author of A Sober Desire for History: William Gilmore Simms as Historian.

COMMONWEAL

Be Not Afraid

by Mark Shea

In Leviticus, God gives Israel a number of blessings and curses that describe the benefits and consequences of keeping (or failing to keep) the Sinai covenant. One of the "covenant curses" is curiously descriptive of the jittery culture of fear in which we now live:

> But if [they] will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments . . . I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth [26:14;36].

A culture of death is a culture of fear, because a culture that loses the holy and freedom-giving fear of God inevitably becomes a culture dominated by the servile fear of man. It becomes afraid of its own shadow—and with good reason, for the shadow of fallen man is very dark indeed at times. Precisely because it is dominated by fear, it is not ruled by truth, or light, or even sanity. In an effort to convince itself that it is not afraid, it turns to bread and circuses to keep up its spirits (Britney Spears Watch!). And as it grows in fear (because bread and circuses do not satisfy the soul), it begins to exaggerate its fear fantasies into "realism," to conflate violence with justice, and strength with cruelty and cunning. And so it behaves much as Saint Paul describes, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).

Fear is the source of all the "What if?" games being played by allegedly serious politicians, pundits, and media types who imagine the main question of the day is "In which remote hypothetical situation would it be OK to torture somebody?"

That is not "moral reasoning," but fishing for excuses, like the guy with the hot secretary and the rocky marriage who is constantly asking "hypothetical" questions about "How far is too far?" and "What is a valid marriage anyway?" and "What if a nuclear holocaust left me permanently separated from my wife? Wouldn't I be bound to repopulate the earth with my secretary?"

This analogy is not, of course, to suggest that our present national choice to succumb to the temptation to torture is the same sort of temptation as the temptation to sleep with the hot secretary. Rather, it is to say that *temptation is temptation*. When you are tempted sexually, you tend to base your thinking on your desires, and when you are afraid, you tend to base your thinking on your fears. That is what concupiscence means. It is the darkened intellect, disordered appetites, and weakened will that result from the Fall. As a result, we often do not think clearly, act sensibly, or do the hard thing God demands. And that is why Revelation and grace are necessary.

Paul commands us, as members of Christ, "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). If we are to do that today, we need to start the conversation on how to treat prisoners based not on our worst fears, but on the Just War tradition that has formed Christian thinking for over a millennium. That teaching says both that we have the right to defend ourselves and that prisoners must be treat humanely. To begin our deliberation on our approach to interrogation apart from the fundamental facts of the Christian tradition concerning the dignity of the human person, the purpose (and limits) of government, and the relationship between the two is to ignore Revelation and allow fear to dictate our thinking. Allowing those fears to tell us we are being "realistic" as we fantasize about ticking time bombs but unrealistic as we contemplate the Tradition is "feeding the flesh," to use Pauline language. After all, "the flesh"

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includes not simply sexual lusts, but servile fear as well.

That is why the entire "torture debate" has produced such evil fruit: It is asking the moral-nonsense question "How close can you get to committing a grave and intrinsically immoral act without crossing the line?" ("How far can I go with the hot secretary before it's adultery?") The question itself is evidence of a gravely corrupted mind and a sure bet that the results of such moral calculus will be rubbish. The real—and almost always unasked—question is "How do we treat prisoners humanely as the Church commands and still get the intelligence we need?" How do we make sure to obey this very clear teaching of the Christian tradition that asserts the permanent validity of the moral law during armed conflict and reminds us that the mere fact that war has regrettably broken out does not mean that anything and everything has become licit between the warring parties?

If we aim to treat prisoners humanely, we will never accidentally torture them. It is only when we aim to torture them while trying to pretend that we are not that we have to involve ourselves in all the endless tergiversation and bafflegab that has characterized the supposedly "realistic" chatter of the Rubber Hose Right for the past six years. And most interesting of all, if we aim to treat prisoners humanely, it turns out we are being not Pollyannaish, but entirely practical about intelligence, according to Army Capt. Kyle Teamey, a current military intelligence officer.

> When I was in the officer's basic course, one of the instructors, only half-jokingly, proclaimed, "Beatings and drugs are for fun, not for information." His point was you can get anyone to say anything you want through torture. Good information came from psychology, interpersonal skills, and long hours with your prisoner. The best interrogators I've worked with tended to be very good at reading people and very good at using their understanding of the person and their culture to get them to talk—no waterboarding required . . .
>
> We should be developing an ideological alternative (or alternatives) to jihad and are instead alienating our allies, enraging the populations from which the terrorists arise, and most importantly, alienating our COG [center of gravity] in the form of the U.S. electorate. A liberal democracy, such as the US, operating in an environment with pervasive media cannot afford to dally in tactics that may provide some short term gains at the expense of long term success.
>
> It is not just the US that has made this error in judgment. The Brits and French did the same in their COIN [counter-insurgency] campaigns in [the] 20th century and suffered for it. We should learn from their mistakes—and ours.

This gets us to the heart of the conflict between Christian Revelation in this matter and the lies (and therefore delusions) of *Realpolitik*.

For what is at the core of all "realistic" consequentialist appeals to do grave evil for the greater good is, ultimately, a refusal to trust that God knows what He is talking about. It is the conviction that the Christian Revelation is not an insight into the very nature of reality but an idealistic daydream that hard thinkers and tough-minded men must sweep away in favor of "practical" solutions. In this analysis, the functional belief of the Machiavellian is "You shall embrace evil, and evil shall make you safe."

The response of Christian Revelation is that this is, not to put too fine a point on it, a lie from the pit of Hell, as well as a snare and delusion. Christian Revelation claims that Christ intends our happiness and knows better than we do what is actually the best way to realize it. This involves a conception of Christ's commands as something other than impossible ideals or as cruel, irrational restrictions we have to obey for no reason other than fear. In short, it involves the idea that the One Who created us did so because He wills our happiness, and that obedience to Him is actually ordered toward life and freedom, not toward our destruction.

Christianity teaches us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Part of this counsel is indeed to trust God and keep your powder dry. But another, and much despised, part involves the seemingly Pollyannaish command of our Lord: "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself." That is not because Jesus is a cockeyed optimist and a fool but because He knows that cultivation of fear is not the same thing as prudence.

Prudence is the clear-eyed ability to see what is so. The cultivation of fear, in contrast, places us not in the "real world" but in a fantasy world of Bruce Willis movies and endless *24* scenarios. In the real world is God and our duty to our family, community, and work. This is not speculation on my part; this is the teaching of the Gospel. For the world, readiness comes from being afraid, tense, jumping at the rustle of leaves, worried about what horrible thing might happen and laboring to fantasize about what crimes you might commit to stop it. For Saint Paul, readiness comes from peace. That is why he tells the Ephesians to let their feet be shod with "the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15). Saint Paul does not command us to rehearse the horrible ways in which we and those we love might suffer (and this was a man who experienced more actual suffering than we ever will). Instead—from jail—he wrote,

> Be [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoev-

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er things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you [Philippians 4:6-9].

That—despite the lie that "9/11 Changed Everything!"—has not changed.

Mark Shea's blog is Catholic and Enjoying It!

SPORTS

Umpires

by John Willson

Mike Carey was the first "African-American" to head a crew that refereed a Super Bowl—the one in which the sainted Tom Brady got his butt kicked by the lowly Giants. The term *African-American* offends me, and should offend all patriots, and probably offends Mike Carey, who is an accomplished entrepreneur and inventor, the CEO of a company that has as much to do with Africa as I have to do with being an "English-American."

Mr. Carey is a good referee. Like most National Football League officials, he is a man who first made a successful life and then transferred good judgment and calm demeanor into a job that few men can do. Referees are judges; they require prudence. In every game we call a sport, there are rules that are broken even more often than in politics or marriages. "Holding" on the offensive line could be called on every play of every football game; so how can Mike Carey draw a line between a competitor and a cheater?

That is the job of referees. *Umpire* was the word most of us grew up with—a derivative of an old English word that described arbiters, men who were given the task of keeping families and tribes from killing each other over matters that could be resolved short of swordplay or gunfire. The reason men such as Mike Carey get appointed to umpire NFL games is that they have the gravitas to sort out competitors from cheaters in the most violent sport we have invented since Rome stopped killing Christians in public arenas.

Even the most serious umpires have become subject to the supposedly more objective tests of cameras. Ted Williams, who may have had the best eyes of any professional athlete ever, decided early in his career never to question an umpire's call; otherwise he would have to question every one of their calls. Major League Baseball players have, on the average, 20-12 vision. They are not like the rest of us. Yet we do not subject their umpires to "replay" cameras—not yet, anyway.

Baseball umpires are street guys—or they have been, historically. You will never see Mike Carey nose to nose with Bill Belichick, but you might see Jim McKean throw the gentleman Jim Leyland out of a baseball game. The cultures are different. NBA referees are a joke. Hockey officials are somewhere between boxing referees and figure skaters and subject, like their football counterparts, to camera decisions. In general, we have diminished umpires, probably with good reason.

I grew up in a time when umpires did not enter our lives until about age 14. No Little League, Pop Warner, or junior this or that. We played whatever game was in season in whatever field or barn was available. We played tackle football in a lot that had a concrete sidewalk as one boundary and a ditch as the other, and one end zone was a gravel driveway. The basketball court was the upper part of our barn, about 30 feet wide and just high enough to get the ball over a regulation basket. We never had even a cinder track to run on. Every game was played with boys working things out with other boys. We learned not to cheat, because cheating drew great penalties; we learned to compete, because *not to compete* drew great penalties. When we got to the formal level and had coaches and referees, it would not have occurred to us to cheat or to fail to respect our umpires. We had worked that out long ago.

Umpires are diminished because the games are diminished. Here is an example. The best referee I have ever known was John Gee. John was six foot nine, and had played with the New York Giants and Pittsburgh Pirates for a year or two. He was a legendary semipro pitcher in western New York, able at the age of 38 or 40 to throw the ball 100 miles per hour, pitching only every other week. I batted against him when I was 15, called into service on our "town team" because injuries reduced us to teenagers. I dug in at the plate. A grizzled old catcher said, "Stay loose, son," and John threw the first pitch right at my left ear. I wanted to go back to the dugout and cry.

Well, you respected a man like that. He refereed many of my high-school basketball games, and he was the only official on the court. When he made a call, nobody argued. I don't remember if he ever made a bad call; it wasn't an issue. John was a high-school principal, a man of accomplishment and principle, and we were boys who had learned by hard knocks to accept what was given to us. Mike Carey, I suspect, has similar respect.

Black boys play basketball and Hispanic boys play baseball in circumstances not unlike the ones I grew up in. Umpires make little difference to them. They just play. Football requires greater order, because it is the most violent game short of war that boys get to play. So, Mike Carey is necessary.

Unfortunately, we now have too many games on too many levels and with too many sexes playing them. Just as there are too few good teachers and too few good priests and too few good CEOs, there are too few good umpires. As the pool is diminished, the games are diminished. Bad umpires synchronize with bad parents. The line between cheaters and competitors is increasingly blurry. Mike Carey, "African-American" or not, might be a dying breed.

John Willson is a professor emeritus of history at Hillsdale College.

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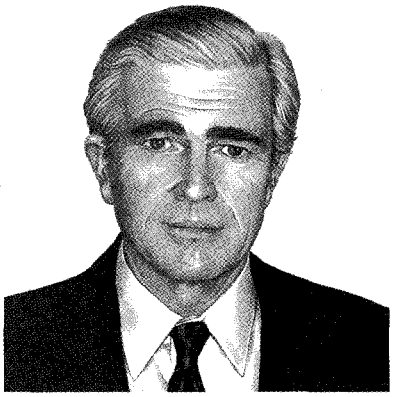
by George McCartney

Forerunners



Brideshead Revisited
Produced by BBC Films and Ecosse Films
Directed by Julian Jarrold
Screenplay by Andrew Davies and Jeremy Brock from the Evelyn Waugh novel
Distributed by Miramax Films

The Dark Knight
Produced and distributed by Warner Brothers Pictures
Directed by Christopher Nolan
Screenplay by Christopher and Jonathan Nolan

Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* is not a novel for the faint of heart. This sumptuously ornate invocation of an aristocratic world receding ineluctably into a fabled past gives many the shivers. Some tingle with thwarted longing; others quake with class-conscious anger. Neither response was what Waugh had sought. When he wrote *Brideshead* in 1944, he was a captain in the British army and convinced that, however the war ended, the world in which he had grown up would be lost forever. He wanted to recall what was best about this period without glossing over its deficiencies. More than this, he wanted to reveal "the operation of Divine Grace on a group of closely connected characters." The splendors of the life he had known among aristocratic friends between the wars was to be a distant second to his theological theme, but he often allowed himself to be carried away with the heady, seductive charm of that world—its art and architecture, its fascinatingly eccentric characters. It's been known to drive staid young men into the streets in search of vested flannel suits and demure young women to their millenary for cloche hats, and those less fashion-conscious back to the barricades of an ever-resurgent class struggle.

The filmmakers responsible for the new adaptation of *Brideshead* must have understood Waugh's intentions well enough, else they would not have been able to disregard them so decisively. Director Julian Jarrold and his writers, Andrew Davies and Jeremy Brock, have simply ignored the novel's Dantesque struggle to strike a moral balance between the claims of this and the next world. In its place, they have manufactured a high-fashion soap opera tricked out with the patented clichés of romantic strife. The press notes distributed at the screening I attended proudly assured us that

> the filmmakers drew on the themes that they felt chimed for our age—particularly the search for individual fulfillment in a world where religious fundamentalism and loyalty to one's tribe seem likely to prevent the possibilities of such happiness.

Fundamentalism, tribalism? Are these people deaf to the cacophony shrieking about their ears in a world bereft of conviction and loyalty? As for individual fulfillment, Waugh made his autobiographical narrator, Charles Ryder, an architectural painter just so he could have him say,

> I have always loved building, holding it to be not only the highest achievement of man but one in which, at the moment of consummation, things were most clearly taken out of his hands and perfected, without his intention, by other means, and I regarded men as something much less than the buildings they made and inhabited, as mere lodgers . . . of small importance in the long, fruitful life of their homes.

For Charles, individuals find their fulfillment to the degree they serve the cultural tradition that shelters them. On the dust jacket of the first edition (1944), Waugh explained that his novel is

> an attempt to trace the workings of the divine purpose in a pagan world . . . The story will be uncongenial alike to those who look back on that pagan world with unalloyed affection and to those who see it as transitory, insignificant and, already, hopefully passed. Whom then can I hope to please? Perhaps . . . those who look to the future with black forebodings and need more solid comfort than rosy memories. To [them] I have given . . . a hope, not, indeed, that anything but disaster lies ahead, but that the human spirit, redeemed, can survive all disasters.

Like Waugh, Charles is a memorialist of a dying tradition. He makes his living by painting aristocratic homes, usually on the eve of their demolition. It seems all of England's finest architecture is being razed to make room for efficient, modern housing and streamlined flats. Charles takes his specialty all the more seriously because he's in love with one of the families of this passing age, the Flytes, whose roots are deeper than most other members of their aristocratic class. On their mother's side, the Flytes are recusants, Roman Catholics who refused to surrender to Henry VIII when he established the English Catholic Church in 1534.

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Charles finds himself beguiled by the charming Flyte children, first Sebastian, whom he meets at Oxford, and then Sebastian's sister Julia at the family estate, Brideshead Castle. He comes to think of the feckless, self-destructive Sebastian as a forerunner, his boyish attraction to him a phase leading to his mature passion for Julia. Brideshead itself inspires longing. This would make Charles a parvenu except that his devotion to the Flytes and their estate stems from his aesthetic sensibility more than his economic acquisitiveness. The Flytes have bewitched the agnostic Charles from his respectable middle-class life into what for him is a perilously exotic ethos. He doesn't realize until much later that the Flyte allure rests on a foundation inestimably deeper and darker than their charm. Their faith, even when it wavers, informs their being for better and, by the measure of this life, sometimes for worse.

If this novel were only a bittersweet tribute to a passing aristocratic culture, it would be little more than wistfully nostalgic. But Waugh puts paid to this notion with his character Anthony Blanche, the homosexual aesthete, based on his friend Harold Acton. Blanche contemptuously describes Charles' paintings as charming, one of the novel's key words. He judges his work skillful, pretty, and pointless. And Charles more than half agrees. Waugh was paralleling Charles' architectural paintings with his own earlier novels. He had come to think of them as well made but lightweight, their easy snobbery especially a flaw.

Waugh had always recognized that his fondness for the aristocracy and their world was a shallow obsession. This is why aristocrats are so roundly mocked in his pages. And yet his awareness of the foibles, vanity, and iniquity of this class was always qualified. He continued to believe there was a genuine cultural benefit in having an aristocracy. There would always be some sort of ruling class, he reasoned, and whatever its sins, Europe's had underwritten some of the world's greatest art and architecture. At the same time, he also understood that artistic achievement doesn't require an hereditary noble class living luxuriously at the expense of the lower orders. Most important, in light of his adopted faith (Waugh converted to Rome in 1930), he became convinced that, as magnificent as European civilization was, it was not an end in itself. This ultimately guides Charles' judgment after he loses Julia (and, with her, the Brideshead estate he so clearly covets) to her theological scruples. Their affair had been adulterous, and civil divorce was not an option for Catholics.

It is Sebastian's older brother, the comically orthodox Bridey, who enables Charles to make peace with his fate, and he does so on aesthetic grounds. "You take art as a means not as an end," Bridey remarks. "That is strict theology, but it's unusual to find an agnostic believing it." Charles doesn't know how to respond to this observation from a man he considers to be a madly religious prig. Until this moment, he had thought Bridey's ideas were utterly without merit, but now he finds himself reconsidering. The full point of Bridey's comment comes triumphantly home at the end of the novel. What Bridey meant was this: Looked at theologically, art, however culturally important, can never be regarded as self-sufficient. By the time Waugh was writing *Brideshead*, he had adopted Bridey's unfashionable position. Ideally, art is a means through which we may come to apprehend a higher reality. The larger culture that nurtures art must be understood to play the same intermediary role. Bridey puts his finger precisely on what's central to European Christian culture. The things of this world, natural or manmade, are merely signs pointing to the next. To put it another way, Waugh was profoundly convinced that the material world is sacramental, through and through.

Charles discovers that the real purpose of the Brideshead estate is not as a home for the Flyte family nor for Julia and himself nor for any one group of individuals of whatever class. It serves as a sign to different people in different ages. In the novel's closing pages, it is 1942, and the army has requisitioned Brideshead. The estate now shelters lower- and middle-class English soldiers. These men may not appreciate the history and culture behind Brideshead; they may discard their cigarettes and half-eaten sandwiches in its fountain; but they attend Mass at the estate's chapel. Standing inside this chapel, Charles says "a prayer, an ancient, newly learned form of words." He then reflects on the lamp that announces the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the altar's tabernacle:

> Something quite remote from anything the builders intended has come out of their work and out of the fierce little human tragedy in which I played; something none of us thought about at the time; a small red flame—a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design, relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle; the flame which the old knights saw from their tombs . . . that . . . burns again for other soldiers, far from home.

Charles goes on to tell us that his second-in-command finds him "looking unusually cheerful." By the standards of this world, Ryder has lost everything: his wife and children to divorce, and Julia and Brideshead to the intransigent principles of Julia's faith. But he's been more than recompensed spiritually. He's found his genuine self by entering the Church.

In Jarrold's film, there are no references to Charles' architectural painting nor any sign he's become a Catholic. In the last scene, he's in the chapel alone. There's no indication the other soldiers ever seek spiritual refuge at its altar. Charles looks utterly inconsolable. It's just boo-hoo all over the place. The end.

The unworldly Bridey, who barely registers in the film, provides the basis for an infinitely more sensational closing to Waugh's meditations. By helping Charles recognize the sacramental nature of the material world, Bridey equips him to understand the corollary of the forerunner. Ryder

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had suggested to Julia that Sebastian might be understood as a forerunner leading him to her. Julia takes this a crucial step farther. "Perhaps," she replies, "I am only a forerunner too." Addressing the reader, Charles reflects that

> perhaps all our loves are merely hints and symbols. . . . [P]erhaps you and I are types and this sadness which sometimes falls between us springs from disappointment in our search, each straining through and beyond the other, snatching a glimpse now and then of the shadow which turns the corner always a pace or two ahead of us.

This is the theological conceit Dante Alighieri elaborated in *The Divine Comedy*, in which he imagined himself attracted to the beautiful Beatrice only to discover that her seductiveness is the beginning of his awakening to beauty in the world and in other human beings. This finally leads him to contemplate the source of all beauty in God. This is what Bridey meant by saying that art is a means, not an end. True art leads us on until we arrive at our home.

You will search in vain in Jarrold's film for any sign of such beauty. I recommend reading the novel, if you haven't already, and watching its 1981 Granada Television serial dramatization adapted by John Mortimer who, despite having scant sympathy for Waugh's faith, admired his artistry and brought it to the screen with honorable fidelity. Even at 13 hours, this production is more spirited and entertaining than Jarrold's wholly uninspired *précis*.

The Dark Knight is another revisiting. As he did in *Batman Begins*, director Christopher Nolan has returned to Bob Kane's 1939 comic-book conception derived from radio's popular heroes The Shadow and The Green Hornet. These were wealthy men who took upon themselves the right to step outside the law in order to protect innocent citizens from criminals. Nolan wants to remind us that Batman (Christian Bale) dangerously appeals to the vigilante in us all.

Several times during the film, Batman's nemesis, The Joker (Heath Ledger), taunts his would-be victims. "Why so serious?" he drawls like a whiny, menacing Peter Lorre. One might ask the same of Nolan. Despite its comic-book origins, the film is a virtual black hole of anger and despair, relieved now and again by flashes of illusory hope. Even the Bat Signal has turned ominous. It once blazed its winged icon upon the night sky calling for Batman's help. Now it's a ragged smudge on the evening's morbid shroud. And when the adventure ends, the forces of good are literally running from the folks they have been risking their lives to defend. Holy Ingratitude, what's going on here?

A possible answer finally shows up in the film's last half-hour. Using his vast computer, Bruce Wayne has transformed all the cell phones of Gotham City's unsuspecting citizenry into sonar surveillance devices, beaming back to his corporate headquarters everything they see and hear. His CEO, Lucius Fox (Morgan Freeman), is appalled. Having equipped Batman with a Batmobile capable of vaporizing armored tanks and a flying extraction gizmo that whisks ne'er-do-wells out of their high-rise redoubts, he finally draws the line. "Spying on 30 million people is not part of my job description," he heatedly informs his boss. This remark answers The Joker's question. Nolan's film is an oblique parody of America's grim misadventures in the Middle East and the domestic abuses they have instigated. This explains why The Joker's principal mode of attack is bombing with the help of unwitting suicides. It explains why Commissioner Gordon allows Batman to put The Joker through an "extraordinary rendition" in order to get him to reveal where he is keeping hostages. It explains why Gotham's skullduggery is being financed by a Chinese businessman based in Hong Kong. It all fits like a lock you wish hadn't been opened.

So Wayne, adopting la-di-da disguise as Gotham's wealthiest playboy, is George Bush; Batman, his unleashed Dick Cheney. This makes The Joker the mad, implacable . . . well, not Al Qaeda exactly. He's rather a preternatural creature of chaos summoned into being by a hopelessly vicious world. He's also the bitter harvest Batman has reaped by his extralegal methods. Madness begets madness.

When Wayne confides to Alfred (Michael Caine), his trusted retainer, that he may stop his Batman exploits, the paternal butler counsels otherwise. "Endure, Master Wayne. . . . They'll hate you for it. But that's the point of Batman; he can be the outcast. He can make the choice that no one else can make, the right choice."

The right choice? We are left to wonder. As Batman, Wayne has inaugurated a return to vigilantism. The more he battens on the ordinary villains represented here by a multiculturalist's nightmare of ethnic gangs, the more violent things become. When we first see Batman in action, he is fighting on two fronts. There are the criminals on one side and his vigilante imitators on the other, with no solution in sight.

Dabbling in nihilism, Nolan has risked squeezing the antic joy out of his superhero extravaganza. That he hasn't is a testament to some awfully fast pacing, cleverly audacious special effects, and an exceptional cast. Bale looks altogether too obsessed to make an attractive hero, but he holds your attention absolutely. Ledger's Joker is an eerily sinuous, sinister terrorist committed to exploding any notion of order that may foolishly linger in the minds of respectable citizens. He smiles his fatal work to see, knowing that it's not the murders he commits that are so important as his ability to stomp out morality itself.

Now a word from Batman's true audience: my 19-year-old Liam. "The film's about hope, Dad, not anger. In the dark, a single match is brilliant. Batman's that match. He sacrifices himself. He becomes an outcast in order to sustain people's faith in the good despite the shadow of evil." Well said and amen.

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The American Dream

The presidential campaign that began the day after the previous one ended nearly four years ago seems increasingly like a dream. I suppose it is part of the American Dream—this belief that, of all the allures and temptations the world has to offer, the greatest is the presidency of the United States; the highest calling, to run for president, and win. This element of the American Dream crystallized nearly two centuries ago in the national boast that anyone can grow up to be president of the United States, a proposition Lew Rockwell once likened to the saying that anybody can go to Hell. Yet the Dream is more comprehensive than the prospect of equal access to the high office of George Washington and Bill Clinton, making it impossible to define with any precision this generalized concept, or sentiment.

With increasing frequency these past ten months, I've caught myself staring at one or another of my fellow Americans, wondering whether he, she, or it is really caught up in rapt contemplation of the American Dream, or if those vacant spaces behind the eyes are simply the result of watching too many primary-night marathons on television. (Our masters entertain to tyrannize.) Truth be told, I have never caught myself daydreaming about such a thing, and neither, to my knowledge, has any of my friends or acquaintances. No one has ever heard of the English Dream, or the French Dream, or of the Italian, Russian, Greek, Egyptian, Arab, Chinese, Zulu, Hottentot, Bali (except in *South Pacific*), Laplander, Aboriginal, Mexican, or Pueblo Dreams. There is American Exceptionalism for you. A brilliant doctoral thesis is waiting to be written, explaining how these countries and peoples ever made it so far even as they did without a Dream—which, of course, would have to have been the American Dream, suitably garbed in diverse dress. (That, after all, is essentially what comparative cultural and political studies are about these days.)

The American Dream, as a talismanic phrase, is traceable to a book called *The Epic of America*, by the popular historian James Truslow Adams, published in 1931. "If," Adams wrote,

> the [accomplishments] already listed were all we [Americans] had to contribute, Americans would have made no distinctive and unique gift to mankind. But there has also been an American Dream, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement.

There is a story that Adams wished to shoehorn the words "American Dream" into his title but that the editor quashed the idea, arguing that "no red-blooded American would pay $3.50 for a dream." If he had, and if book titles could be copyrighted, every American politician from the New Deal forward would have bankrupted his campaign in the attempt to pay a permission fee every time he resorted to the term (which by its nature is entirely impervious to abuse). Cynics have noted that it was coined at just that moment in American history—the onset of the Great Depression—when a dream marked "Made in U.S.A." was likely to be a bad dream. But the 30's was the decade in which Americans liked to assure themselves, repeating after their Dear Leader, that the only thing they had to fear was fear itself—an illusory sentiment uplifting in those times not yet immortal, as Adams' formulation proved itself to be.

If such a thing as the American Dream does indeed exist, then what sort of dream is it? Freudian? Jungian? Opium? Freud thought that dreams were expressions of neuroses; Jung, that they derive from archetypal images behind primeval human thought and emotion. Marx called religion the opiate of the masses, but some skeptics of democracy have perceived in that now-hallowed form of government opiate qualities as well. Dreams seem to be divided roughly between nightmare and wish-fulfillment ones, in which the wish-object is usually something we oughtn't to have, or even to wish for. In between these two categories is wedged a third one, comprising dreams of a slightly sinister unreality that are not however recognized to be such until after the dreamer has awakened from them, usually at around three o'clock in the morning, Scott Fitzgerald's dark night of the soul.

Centuries before the American Dream was dreamed of (or up), American colonists and those Europeans who wished to follow them thought and spoke of America—and later the United States—as the Land of Opportunity. (Today, the Chinese call her the Golden Country.) The Land of Opportunity was an accurate and quite unsentimental designation, one that encouraged hard thinking and careful imagining, a sense of reality that included the possibility of risk as well as of success. America as the Land of Opportunity made promises to no one, and she did not encourage dreaming, but action. America had land, she had resources, she had climate, she had distance from Europe and a formidable ocean barrier between her and potential European ag-

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gressors that made invasion difficult and improbable, and "entangling alliances" unnecessary. Tocqueville was impressed, and he made much in *Democracy in America* of these geographic advantages, arguing that "In the United States not legislation alone is democratic, for Nature herself seems to work for the people." But natural freedom and nature's *richesse* were incentives to hard labor, not a substitute for it, and the social and political freedoms the Americans enjoyed were the fruit of the vigilant and conscientious political and administrative efforts they made and the skills they developed, starting at the level of the New England township Tocqueville so admired for its democratic makeup, spirit, and efficiency. In Tocqueville's New England as earlier, Americans did not invite one another to contemplate a dream of anything—including Heaven itself, which for them was a City too brilliant an object for contemplation but an elusive goal attainable by faith, prayer, good works, and hard work.

From the perspective of the 21st century, America's "gift" to the world and to herself appears rather more to have been a curse. The American Dream is simply no way to think about a country, one's own life, or life itself. Nor is it a way to think about human history, or the world. It is hard to know the extent to which this sentimental twaddle is taken seriously anymore in this country or abroad, or how far it is an easy conceit of American politicians and our secular Holy Rollers for democracy, providing them pious fill with which to pad out their mindless, ignorant, anti- or ahistorical speeches, articles, and books, to much of which the American public has become as thoughtlessly inured as it is to Muzak in a bustling airport. Even so, all this brain-bilge sloshing around the media cannot be healthy for anyone, including, especially, those who propagate it. We are what we read, hear, speak, write, and repeat to one another, however casually and unthinkingly. When I was a young man, I believed that only the weakest and most inferior of men were susceptible to brainwashing. I no longer believe that. Today, we Americans inhabit a world in which the only further possible act of brainwashing is mass lobotomy.

An especially dangerous element of the American Dream is the promise that life for everyone in America must and will get better and better—more money, more possessions, more freedom for everyone—and that every generation of Americans will enjoy a higher standard of living and of health than did its predecessor. It is this promise that makes the Dream so useful to politicians and so corruptive for the rest of us. Barack Obama, while running for president, has repeatedly vowed to reduce healthcare premiums by $2,500 for the average American family and to have in place a national health plan before the end of his first term in office. As the progressive crisis in healthcare has been expanding and deepening for decades, and because it was caused in the first place by the government's intrusion on the private medical system in order to socialize it, it should be obvious to everyone that Obama's promise is sheer demagoguery and that a "plan" coming from his hands could only worsen immeasurably an already dire situation. Similarly, after George W. Bush determined, early in his presidency, that the fulfillment of the American Dream depends on home ownership for every American, the government financial system and the national real-estate market leaped to realize this visionary quest by making home mortgages available to everyone, including people with no money and no credit. The result is the current financial crisis that threatens to destroy first the national economy, and next the international one. The American Dream, like democracy itself but to an even greater degree, is inherently inflationary, and therefore ultimately destructive. America cannot afford the American Dream. Dreaming is infinite, reality finite, yet Americans are encouraged by their so-called leaders to disregard this inconvenient fact. The moral responsibility for doing so, however, is ultimately theirs. When former Sen. Phil Gramm recently criticized public "whining" about the deplorable state of the economy, he was passing a valid moral judgment on the content of the modern American character.

By emphasizing the American Dream at the expense of the notion of a Land of Opportunity, Americans have only succeeded in diminishing the reality of both. People do not enhance their dreams by living in a dream-world. Modern America has ceased significantly—certainly it is ceasing—to be a land of opportunity, unless by opportunity one means the ability of anyone who wishes to come here to start a Korean grocery, a Chinese laundry, a Mexican restaurant or bodega, or to establish an American base for the Russian mafia. As early as 1830-31, Tocqueville recognized a narrowing of opportunity for Americans of the highest type who he thought were constrained by democratic dogma and democratic shibboleths and prejudices. He spoke mainly of intellectual and political constraints, which have relentlessly increased since the early 19th century and to which have been added those of another order within the political and economic worlds, until today the United States has become substantially an aggregation of interlinked and interlocked controlling interests that, as Clyde Wilson rightly noted, is more typical of empire than of republican democracy.

Barack Obama, the mulatto presidential nominee sprung from the loins of a white Kansas woman and a black man from Kenya, embodies the American Dream as it has been understood at least since James Truslow Adams' day. But a fictional character more truly represents both the Dream and the Dreamer. The Great Gatsby, today as nearly a century ago, remains the best, most penetrating, and most honest treatment of this fatal, yet quintessentially American, illusion. ◁C

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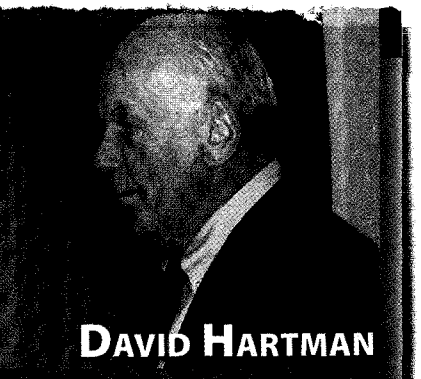
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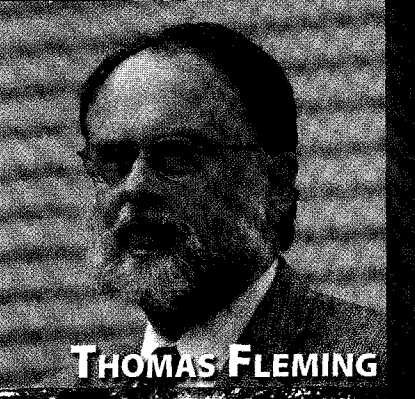
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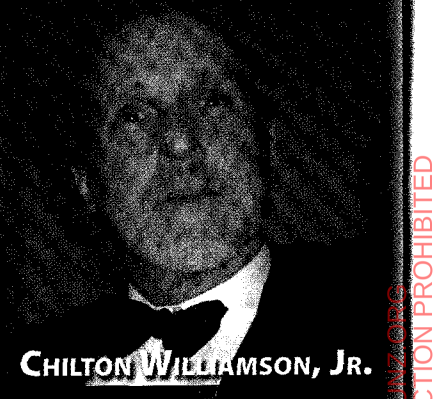
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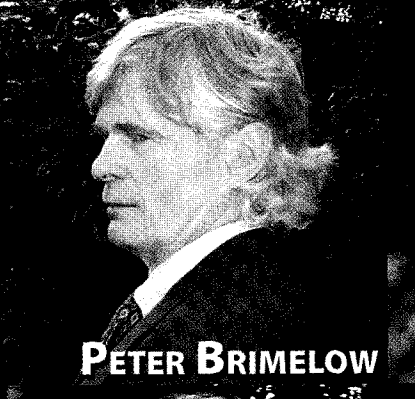
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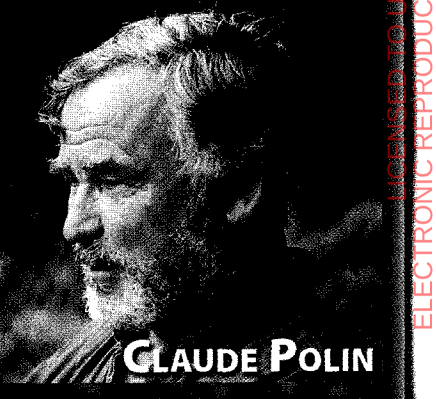
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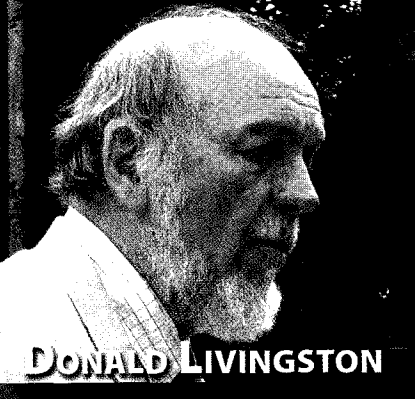
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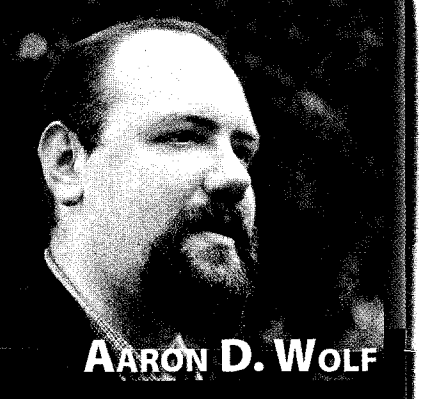
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